

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF INCARCERATION: STORIES
OF MY WORK AS A MISSIONARY TO CHILDREN
OF INCARCERATED PARENTS

Mona Davies

B.A., Pace University, 1981
M.A., University of Redlands, 1996
M.A., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2001
M.Div., Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, 2001

Mentors

J. Randy Grimes, D. Min.
Harold Hudson, D. Min.
Stephen Swisher, D. Min.

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ABSTRACT

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by
Mona Davies
United Theological Seminary, 2014

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J. Randy Grimes, D. Min.
Harold Hudson, D. Min.
Stephen Swisher, D. Min.

The context of this project is Community Outreach Ministry in Riverside, California, interviewing six families caught in the cycle of incarceration. The problem was no stories addressing the children's needs by the children of incarcerated parents existed in the literature. The objective included apprehending and analyzing fifteen stories in eight weeks. The hypothesis accepted the children's stories as a research tool informing interventions for breaking the cycle of incarceration. A qualitative research narrative case study was implemented. The findings tested that the qualitative insights from the stories informed the model program as effective interventions to break the cycle of incarceration.

INTRODUCTION

My project, “Breaking the Cycle of Incarceration: Stories of My Work as a Missionary to Children of Incarcerated Parents”, demonstrates God’s call on my life to reach this population with the Gospel and to have victory over adversity. I was led to write success stories of how God used my missionary work to bring intervention and liberation to children affected by parental incarceration. My project evolved through a process that is described in six chapters. The following chapters unveil problems and corresponding treatments designed to prevent the children of incarcerated parents from repeating the same mistakes as their parents. The identified interventions have been incorporated into a model that can be utilized to reach children everywhere, to provide them with the help they need to avoid being the next generation of inmates.

In Chapter One I related my need for a Savior to the children of incarcerated parents’ need for a Savior. In my neighborhood, it was common for family members to be taken from their home and sent to prison. Unfortunately, nobody came to share the Gospel with me or my neighbors, and the issues in my neighborhood resulted in many children dying of drug overdoses and gang violence. I know that God chose me to bring the Gospel to at-risk children, so they could receive Christ, and overcome evil. My context for this project was Riverside California. In this area, families are affected by incarceration and are in need of humanitarian, social, spiritual, and educational intervention. My ministry provides referral services meeting humanitarian needs. We also

raise hope for the future, by sharing the Good News with the poor, neglected, and oppressed.

In Chapter Two I have shared what I learned about what others are doing to impact these children and families. It was inspiring to see how God has strategically placed His people to give support to children, teens, incarcerated parents, and caregivers. Needed support is provided to enable children to develop character and grow, through participation in after school clubs, church activities, summer school, tutoring, mentoring, and camping programs. Parenting classes, drug recovery programs, mental health and re-entry programs are provided for parents while in correctional and rehabilitations settings. And in addition, support groups are available through the county, non-profit organizations and churches for caregivers facing challenges and financial hardships.

In Chapter Three I meditated on and discussed an Old Testament and a New Testament scripture. The scriptures revealed the value that God places on ministering to the destitute, poor, and needy and the care and training of our youngsters. Children of incarcerated parents struggle with absentee parents and shame. They need someone to fill the gap in their life that was left by their absent parent, as well as train them in God's word and teach them right from wrong. The majority of the participants that I interviewed were high school dropouts, who had a child while still in their teens, and were living below the poverty level.

Through my biblical, historical, and theological research, I have identified with the heart of Asaph, a Levite priest, and John Wesley, who was an eighteenth century theologian, as well as Gustavo Gutierrez, a twentieth century Catholic theologian. Each of these priests prayed and took action to liberate the poor and oppressed and to restore

justice. Their lives have given me further affirmation that I should continue to bring the Gospel to families caught in the cycle of incarceration, and assurance to pave the way for future improvements.

In Chapter Four I described that I have elected to conduct qualitative research and have utilized a narrative inquiry case study approach. As a result of interviewing six children and families caught in the cycle of incarceration, patterns and themes have emerged that identified what started the incarcerated parents on the road to destruction and incarceration. The interviewees have been identified in this summary as co-researchers and participants. This paper argues that, previously, insufficient knowledge of the co-researchers' stories has led to ineffective treatments. Dialoguing with these children and families has opened my eyes to understanding how to recognize negative patterns, and enabled me to suggest interventions designed to prevent future adversities and to give these participants a sense of resilience.

In Chapter Five the themes that emerged from these case studies indicated that the incarcerated parents in this study typically went to prison due to similar underlying reasons: drug addictions, associating with detrimental groups, and being influenced to do dreadful things. Themes that emerged regarding common issues the children struggled with included feelings of being unloved, loneliness, and fear of being asked questions about the whereabouts of their parents. One child explained that when people asked about his incarcerated parent, he felt as if a gun was being pointed at his head, and he described it as torture.

In Chapter Six common themes emerged based on coding that was conducted across the sample groups of incarcerated parents, children of incarcerated parents, and

caregivers of children of incarcerated parents. The themes were identified and reported because they were common among all participants. The suggested solutions to the problems identified have been documented and described as effective interventions and programs in a manner that provides a model for others to replicate. It is my desire to make this data available to people in positions of influence and authority, to help improve the outcomes for children and families who have found themselves caught in the cycle of incarceration. Practitioners state-to-state and nationwide are encouraged to replicate and adapt the model, in federal and state systems to raise the hope and expectations of this population.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

Spiritual Autobiography

A spark ignited inside of me and has lead me to the point in my spiritual pilgrimage where my particular ministry focus is significant to propose a doctoral project entitled, “Breaking the Cycle of Incarceration: Stories of My Work as a Missionary to Children of Incarcerated Parents.” I am reaching out to children who have had a mother, father, or both parents in the California Adult Criminal Justice System. In the year 2000, approximately 856,000 children had a parent in the California Adult Criminal Justice System: 564,000 adults were on parole or probation, 195,000 were in state prison, and 97,000 were in County Jail.¹

I am bringing these children, who are innocent victims of injustices, the good news, and they are being transformed by the Gospel through outreach.² Many of these children are poor, neglected, and oppressed and have been left behind to struggle physically, emotionally, psychologically, spiritually, financially, and relationally. These youngsters are being punished for crimes they have not committed. They are living under

¹Charlene Wear Simmons, “Children of Incarcerated Parents,” *California Research Bureau* 7, no. 2 (March 2000), 2.

²Ashley Cook, “Broken Children Transformed by Outreach Program,” *My Valley News* 9, no. 9 (February 27, 2009), 5.

the protection of grandparents, relatives, foster families or group homes. However, that does not diminish the daily sorrow felt due to an absent incarcerated parent.³ Through year round outreach camping, and mentoring programs, these children are being strengthened socially, spiritually and educationally. The Gospel is transforming and empowering these children to be future winners and champions.

God has given me an “aha moment” and with it, the message that it is my mission to defend and maintain the rights of these children, and to be a voice for the voiceless. Through critical reflection, I have received a divine understanding that has connected my need for a Savior when I was a child, to these children’s identical need for a Savior. My assumptions are that at the end of this project, themes will emerge from the children’s stories to inform suggestions for developing treatments and interventions to prevent their incarceration.

In regard to my spiritual pilgrimage, before I knew Christ, my life lacked peace and purpose. I grew up in a lower socioeconomic neighborhood, where there was a dark cloud over the community. Alcoholism was rampant, and children at an early age got caught up in substance abuse, gangs, violence and criminal activities, and often served time in detention and prison. It was normal to see policemen come into the neighborhood and go inside of the flats to arrest, handcuff, and take away offenders in the paddy wagon. At the station, the offenders were booked and sent to serve time. These children in my neighborhood were victims of injustices perpetrated by predators who were stealing their innocence. I saw the cycle of alcoholism and incarceration passed down

³Jann Gentry, ed., “Breaking the Cycle of Crime, One Child at a Time,” *Business Scene Magazine*, (November/December 2011), 44.

from the older generation to the younger generation. I can identify firsthand with the multiple risks, difficulties and the struggles children of an incarcerated parents experience, such as loss, pain, brokenness, homelessness, abandonment, rejection, physical and mental abuse, fear, and oppression.

As an adult I moved out of the neighborhood, and went to live in another state. For the first time in my life, I met a family who shared the Gospel with me in their home. It was July of 1982 when I accepted Christ into my heart and was filled with God's peace and purpose. I wondered where the Christians were when I was growing up; were they secret agents.

After Christ came into my life, I read the Bible and went to church, and this family and I had mid-week Bible study together. I grew spiritually, "where I was planted" and was committed to Christ. Six years later, my job transferred me out of state and covered my moving expenses. This move entailed a work promotion, but more importantly, it launched me into an intensive Bible training "boot camp" that led me into being bi-vocational, working full time in the aerospace industry and volunteering full time in ministry.

It was August of 1988 when I started working in a manufacturing facility, building air vehicles. On my way home after my first day of work, I spotted a big cross by the side of the road. I told myself, "I am going there on Sunday to church." My apartment was just a few minutes away from the church, and close to the plant. Since I was in an area that was new to me, this church on the Seattle Tacoma International Boulevard would be easy for me to find.

At church that first Sunday morning, I sat next to an older lady and wept quietly. At the end of the service, the pastor invited people to come forward for prayer. I stayed in my seat, but listened to the prayer. A few days later, there was a knock at my door, and when I opened the door, standing in front of me was the pastor from the church with two other people named Charles and Donna. The pastor said he got my address from the visitor card that I had filled out at church on Sunday. Pastor explained that they were an intercessor team and that they visited new attendees in their homes and asked how they could pray for them. I invited them into my apartment and they prayed for me. Boxes were stacked everywhere, as I had just moved in, but there was just enough room for them to squeeze together and sit on the couch. I sat on the floor facing them, and I will always remember how they welcomed me into the community, prayed for me, and invited me to come back to church on Sunday. They were my new friends and little did I know then that this pastor would act as my mentor for the next six years. Nor did I know then that he would pour into me the vision that I was to reach the lost, broken and hurting people in the streets, bring them to Jesus Christ, and transition them into the church to grow in faith.

The following week, I received a telephone call from Pastor inviting me to a City Ministry advance. City Ministry was composed of intercessors, evangelists and Bible study group leaders who did outreach in the community. I went to the advance and I saw God move through the worship, prayer, and the teams. I made a commitment to be on the intercessor team, and to go visit people in the community.

As I reflected back to my formative years, I remembered that nobody came to pray for the families where I had grown up. This is why there was that dark cloud that

hung over my neighborhood, it was because the light of the Gospel was absent. There was no church presence, and no witnesses; only darkness. Consequently, the devastating results of a silent church were that young members of the neighborhood dropped out of school, committed crimes were incarcerated, and their lives were cut short. They self-destructed from drug overdoses, violence, gang involvement, stabbings, and gunshots.

Ministry Development

During the summer of 1988, I started “boot camp” with the intercessors, and every Sunday morning and evening, one hour before the services commenced, we prayed. During Sunday school, the intercessors studied the Bible and Dean Sherman’s book and video series on *Spiritual Warfare for Every Christian*. At the 5:00 P.M. hour, the intercessors learned to pray, listen to God, receive insights and strategies, and record in a journal what the Lord said to them. During mid-week services, the teams of intercessors, evangelists and Bible study group leaders were sent into the community to perform outreach and minister to the lost. As an intercessor on a team of three, we received visitor cards and went to visit the new attendees who had come to church on Sunday. Our mission as intercessors was to go and pray for the families in their apartments.

The church was located “on the strip” next door to a nude bar. In front of the church, prostitutes roamed and hooked up with their clients, while drug deals were conducted and drugs were sold to anybody who paid cash. Many of the parents in the area were drug addicted or incarcerated, and the children were often left behind to fend for themselves. It struck me how similar this neighborhood was to the neighborhood I grew up in. Flashbacks of youngsters in my old neighborhood went through my mind, as

I recollected seeing young people drowning deep into darkness without a life preserver. This is when a spark ignited inside of me and God's purpose for my life was revealed; I was to bring the Gospel as the life preserver to these children and families. God quickened my spirit, sharpened my eyes, and opened my ears to focus in on their pain and heartache, and to see the binding spirits that were destroying these families. Through the Gospel these binding spirits were demolished and their lives were saved by the grace of God.

God's Call Came To Me Through A Dream

God visited me in a dream and called me into evangelism. In my dream, I had an enormous bed outside, underneath the stars, and the poor, homeless, hungry and down trodden people came to the bed for rest and refuge. In my dream I awoke hearing myself praying and leading Peggy to the Lord. Peggy was shabbily dressed carrying her son in rags, and her son had a bruised face. My dream happened on June 10, 1989 at 4:11 A.M., and it propelled me to go and study with the evangelists to learn how to effectively share my faith.

Classes in Evangelism Explosion III International were conducted at my church and I became a trainee, going out with a trainer among a team of three. After sixteen weeks of training, I became an evangelism trainer and took out two trainees each week, sharing the gospel in the community. God had opened my eyes to see the tremendous humanitarian and spiritual needs of poor children and families. After being a trainer, I became a certified teacher through further work at the Evangelism Explosion headquarters in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. As a class teacher, I gave lectures and did role

modeling for the trainees and trainers before sending them out to witness. In my heart I knew that I was called to schedule my vacation from work to allow me to be at the next Evangelism Explosion III International clinic leader training with Dr. D. James Kennedy. After I had completed clinic leader training, under my leadership, my church became the first qualified church in the northwest United States to train thirty pastors and lay leaders each year to implement Evangelism Explosion into their local churches. Pastors came annually to my church from across the United States, Alaska, and Canada and as far away as Australia to be equipped to train their church members to win the lost to Christ in their communities.

It was here in this church that God shaped, commissioned, licensed and ordained me into an urban missionary pastor and sent me from the church into the local cities to win the hearts of lost, broken and hurting people to Christ. Surrounding the church were what God coined in me “gold mines” of souls in lower income apartment complexes, county projects, trailer parks and seedy motels. These people needed to be rescued and God did not fail them.

God gave me the vision to go to the local apartment managers and land lords surrounding the church and introduce myself and my church. Then I asked the managers and landlords for permission to do outreach on their property. At each apartment complex, trailer park, and county project, God lead me to walk and pray over the land. Then, He would give me the strategy as to how to get in the door. At the County projects, the strategy was to approach a grandmother who was outside sitting on the porch with her granddaughter. I asked “Grandma Barbara” if I could come and tell Bible stories to her granddaughter and, she said, “absolutely,” I would love for you to come and tell my

granddaughter stories from the Bible.” Through Grandma Barbara’s invitation, the property management opened up their community room for me to share Bible stories and the other residents were welcomed.

The trailer park was comparable to being in a third world country as some of the trailers did not have running water, heat, or utilities. I went and introduced myself to Mr. Lee, the owner of the trailer park, and asked him for permission to do outreach. Mr. Lee responded, “Yes, but under one condition.” When I asked what condition, he replied, “every resident must receive a written invitation in their mail box and be invited to the outreach.” My heart leaped with joy and I assured him that I would personally put the invitations in all sixty four mail boxes. We agreed on a date and the outreach event happened. The Gospel came to the families in this trailer park and many humanitarian and spiritual needs were met.

In the apartment complexes, the managers would literally give me an empty apartment during the winter to use for bringing the families together to hear Bible stories. The “No Trespassing” signs came down, and God opened the doors into these communities. This happened as a result of the prayer and spiritual warfare that occurred every week through the intercessors, evangelists and bible study group leaders who were plowing up the fallow ground. The teams were taking back ground by force, taking possession of the city, and occupying the land. The drug trafficking and crime decreased, and the managers and land lords were so grateful that they came into the church to express their thankfulness for the City Ministry teams.

I told my pastor that I wanted to go deeper into God’s word, and he suggested Berean School of the Bible, knowing that I was already working full time and doing

ministry full time. I enrolled in a Bible correspondence program, and studied from 4:30 A.M. to 6:30 A.M. every morning. I worked at the plant from 7:40 A.M. to 3:40 P.M. and was at church by 4:00 P.M. where I worked late into each night and a full day on Sunday. When I graduated from Berean, my church licensed me as a Minister of the Gospel, and I became the Director of City Ministry.

God then showed me that my next step was to invite the children to church, call them by name, and bring them into Sunday school. My nephew and I hand wrote the invitations on 3"x5" index cards using crayons, and personalized them to each child by name.

My church had a bus, but it was not being used. I approached Leonard, the church janitor, who had also been my evangelism trainer, and we prayed that the bus would run. Leonard took the keys and we went inside the bus. He pumped the pedal, put the key in the ignition, turned the key and it started up. We were thrilled. I asked my pastor for permission to use the church bus to bring the children to Sunday school. The office administrator put together a bus policy, and procured bus insurance. The next Sunday, the children's classes multiplied, and the church leadership recognized a second Sunday morning service had to be added.

The senior citizens in the church came up with the idea of bussing the children mid-week into the church to be tutored in academics, and fed a meal. The tutoring improved the children's grades and their behavior in school. The school principal came and visited the church to see the children engaging with the senior citizens and to observe the program in action. These children's lives were being changed; they were behaving in school and their grades were improving.

My pastor sent me as a key representative of the church to participate in a city wide collaborative that was based on the vision of providing for the humanitarian and spiritual needs of these children and their families. The collaborative involved the participation and cooperation of land lords, businesses, civic organizations, schools, and law enforcement agencies, all of which united together to meet the needs of these families.

Vision

The Lord anointed me to write a community employee proposal to raise resources to bless the poor children with food and gifts at Christmas. During the planning stages of the Christmas party, I approached the Boeing Good Neighbor fund to provide food and gifts for the holiday. Boeing responded with a check for \$1,500.00 for food and a semi-tractor trailer truck filled with toys was delivered to the church. There were so many toys, that we gave toys to other non-profit organizations to brighten up the holidays for other needy children, as well.

In the summer, God gave me the idea to host a carnival in the church parking lot, for the children and families to come out for an evening of entertainment. There was a professional clown club at my plant, and I invited the clowns to come. The clown club donated their time and brought treats and prizes for all of the children. The local police and fire departments were invited to have a tug of war and water fight, and they came. Each of the church departments put up tables with crafts and games to engage visitors, and local stores donated refreshments. I got to share the gospel from a stage that was

specially built to be used in the church parking lot. At the carnival, the children also received an invitation to the church Vacation Bible School.

That summer, 200 children came to Vacation Bible School for the first time in their lives. My pastor loved it, and asked me to invite these children and their families to a special dedication ceremony that would provide an opportunity to dedicate these children to Jesus. The date was set, the invitations went to the families, and they came to church. The front altars were filled with these precious children who came to be dedicated.

I also recruited volunteers from my work to help with these events at the church, and one of the fellows who really jumped in and helped me was Bob. My office was located right next to his, but we really did not know each other. After I recruited him as a volunteer to help me at church, we became friends and fell in love. We were married in this church with the big cross by the side of the road on November 26, 1993. At the beginning of the new year, our jobs were transferred out of state.

Career Move to Los Angeles

In January 1994, we relocated to Los Angeles, and God was there waiting for us! We moved to a place that was close to work, and found a church that was involved in Evangelism Explosion. We met with our new senior pastor and received his blessing to jump into evangelism. God continued to use me to reach out to the local apartment complexes and bring the Gospel to unbelievers. Our new community was a sprawling metropolis, with suburbs and bedroom communities connected by mass transportation. It

seemed like the cities, the suburbs and the bedroom communities were all dealing with violence, drugs and crises, and in every crisis the answer was the Gospel.

The associate pastor at our new church told me stories about his classes in seminary and I got so excited that I visited his school, Fuller Theological Seminary, School of World Mission, and filled out an application. I earned my Master's Degree in Intercultural Studies and loved learning under Ph.D.'s who served in world wide missions. God affirmed my mission field was home missions right in my neighborhood reaching those who needed the Gospel as a life preserver.

Through Fuller I became acquainted with other urban ministries who had a heart for home missions. The Reverend Samuel Atchison, president of the Trenton Ecumenical Area Ministry (TEAM), and his community outreach efforts in Mercer County, New Jersey. He had a partnership with the Amachi Mentoring Coalition Project (AMCP). Amachi is headquartered in Philadelphia mentoring children impacted by incarceration. In an article by Atchison, he quotes Bob Lupton, president and founder of Focus Communities Strategies, who said, "whether the poor people live in the city or in the suburbs, the church in the city, with all of her infrastructure and support services, must now help the church in the suburbs to help the poor who have fled from the city."⁴

In our new church, God continued to raise me up to implement City Ministry. I started by first training intercessors then sending them out to pray over the land in the

⁴Samuel K. Atchison, "New Challenges, New Opportunities for Suburban Churches," accessed July 2, 2013, <http://www.patheos.com/Resources/Additional-Resources/New-Challenges-New-Opportunities-for-Suburban-Churches-Samuel-Atchison-05-06-2011.html>.

community. At Fuller Theological Seminary, my understanding of spiritual warfare was growing under the teaching of Dr. C. Peter Wagner a former missionary to Bolivia. Another professor was a former missionary to Africa, Dr. Charles H. Kraft, he taught me about inner healing for the broken hearted, and to set the captives free (Lk 4:18-19). These classes were exactly what I needed, and provided me with an arsenal of new tools to put into practice in my ministry. Dr. Kraft particularly got my attention when he talked about second career missionaries, and how they were at an advantage because they had finances to be self-sustaining. He also recommended holding off on getting a doctorate degree for ten years. He said, “First go into the mission field and do the work of ministry, then get your doctorate.” This is exactly what happened to me. In 2001, I graduated with my Master’s Degree in Intercultural Studies, and in 2012, I was accepted into United Theological Seminary, and graduated “Doctor of Ministry,” in 2014.

Context Analysis

Mona and her husband, Bob, co-founded the Community Outreach Ministry, a 501 C 3 non-profit home mission in the year 2000 in Riverside, California after retiring from industry “because we wanted to do more for at-risk kids.”⁵ The Davies’ are self-sufficient and serve as missionary pastors. The ministry is operated by a voluntary board of directors and staffed with volunteers; there are no paid employees. The ministry has five members of the board of directors, all of whom are professionals and own and operate their own private businesses. These directors donate their time, talents, and

⁵Lynn Loyd, “Area Ministry Strives to Help Kids,” *U-T the Californian*, July 14, 2014, 1.

finances, to operate booths at outreach events, represent the ministry at collaboratives, and participate in fundraising activities. The directors pray for the ministry, and meet with Mona and Bob twice monthly for two to three hours per meeting to plan and achieve the goals of the ministry.

Mona was commissioned a missionary in 1992, licensed to preach in 1993, and ordained in 1998 a minister of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ by the authority of the Church by the Side of the Road of Seattle, Washington. Her credentials are held in cooperation with the Fellowship of Christian Assemblies a worldwide non-denominational fellowship of churches with roots in the Pentecostal revival of the early 1900's. Mona has actively served in the fellowship for twenty-five years and participates in the annual conference in the United States, as well as the quarterly clusters in California.

As an urban missionary pastor, Mona is called to home missions where she is reaching unbelievers in her community. The ministry is funded through fundraising events, private donations, in-kind donations, sponsors, partners, and grants. All funds coming into the ministry go directly to benefit at-risk children through scholarships. The ministry offers free emergency referral services, food and gifts at the annual Christmas party and year round outreach, camping and mentoring programs. Through these programs, the smallest victims of crime are being given an opportunity to reshape the rest of their lives. They are learning their lives are significant and that through God they have the capacity to achieve great things. It is exciting to see their young lives being changed, families being preserved, and our community being enriched through outreach.

In addition to the above described activities, every six months, the ministry hosts a free electronic e-waste fundraising event that provides an opportunity for local residents and businesses to dispose of their obsolete electronic computers, laptops, fax machines, printers, cell phones, and televisions. The proceeds benefit children with incarcerated parents, allowing them to receive scholarships to go to week long camps and receive gifts at the annual Christmas party.⁶ In addition to raising money, this e-waste program provides public awareness by offering a proper way of disposing of electronic waste in a way that reduces environmentally unsafe and illegal dumping in city landfills.

Each year, campers are taken out of stressful environments to relax, make new friends, and have fun in a safe place, surrounded by the beauty of nature. At camp, youngsters develop positive behavioral skills, self-esteem, and learn how to reduce risky behavior. Children go on field trips every day to the water slide, swimming, boating, and hiking. They engage in team sports, are challenged in creative arts, and participate in group activities. They come away from these experiences empowered with the confidence of knowing they are greatly loved, and that their lives count. During this experience, the children literally bang on the doors to get into Chapel because it is so much fun. Chapel meets twice daily, in the morning and evening. The kids sing love songs to Jesus, sign, dance, do skits, and win prizes for memorizing scriptures. Youngsters attending camp must be between the ages of seven to eighteen.⁷ When the children turn eighteen, they are eligible to become counselors. Many of these campers

⁶“E-Waste Event to Benefit Community Outreach Ministry,” *The Valley News* 15, no. 16 (April 23, 2011), 17, accessed October 26, 2013, <http://www.myvalleynews.com/story/55812>.

⁷“Angel Tree Camping—A Life Changing Experience,” *The Murrieta Bugle*, September 2007, 8.

have a goal to become camp counselors to give back and invest in the younger generation, pointing them to Jesus.⁸

Local firefighters have allowed at-risk boys who are involved with Community Outreach Ministry to visit the fire station, and they speak their wisdom and experience into the children's lives. At the station, the firemen cook a delicious meal, then serve the boys, and sit around the table eating and getting to know each other over dinner. After dinner, the boys go on a tour of the station, where they are taught about the fire equipment and given a ride in a fire engine. This also is a great way for these youngsters to learn about how to become a firefighter when they grow up.⁹

In honor of President Obama's proclamation of Mentoring month in America, Mona submitted an article entitled "Mentoring—Preparing Our Kids for Success"¹⁰ that was published in a March/April 2010 periodical. The program described targets children of prisoners who are at higher risk of becoming the next generation of inmates. Mona's desire is to prepare these troubled youth to prevent school dropout, crime, abuse, poverty, and help them to live productive, healthy life styles.¹¹

Ashley was one such child, who was raised by a single mother and during high school came to volunteer with Community Outreach Ministry for community service

⁸Christine Dominguez, "Community Outreach Ministry How Youth Camp Shaped the Lives of Two Brothers," *Murrieta Patch*, June 21, 2013.

⁹Bob and Mona Davies, "Firefighters Reach Out to Community Children," *The Valley News*, 52, no.12, December 26, 2008, 6.

¹⁰Mona Davies, "Mentoring—Preparing Our Kids for Success," *Bear Creek Chronicle*, March/April 2010, 14.

¹¹Ibid.

credit. Through this volunteer relationship, Mona led Ashley and her family to the Lord, and disciplined them in Christ. Ashley went on to serve as a camp counselor and mentor, and became a first generation believer, high school and university graduate. Ashley graduated with honors, and received a registered nursing degree from the University of California. Today she is working as a registered nurse in a local hospital and tutors for the Foundation for California Community Colleges, teaching foster youth basic mathematics and English skills to pass the California High School Exit Exam.¹²

Lindsay Shepardson has served as a camp counselor and year round mentor for Community Outreach Ministry. Lindsay came to Community Outreach Ministry to volunteer while she was an explorer with the United States Border Patrol. While volunteering as an explorer she wrote a story entitled *Christmas Morning*.¹³ The explorers and their group leaders are year round partners with Community Outreach Ministry. They serve by wrapping gifts for Christmas, making Easter baskets, and manning booths at outreaches.¹⁴ Local Riverside sheriffs, firefighters and California Highway Patrol staff bring their vehicles to the annual Christmas party so that the children can learn about the equipment and become more aware of their explorer programs. Community Outreach Ministry intentionally engages law enforcement agencies to participate in these events so that the children will get to know the deputies,

¹²Maggie Avants, "Local Youth Mentor Goes on to Graduate from CSULB," *Murrieta Patch*, (January 19, 2013), accessed August 26, 2013, <http://murrieta.patch.com/groups/announcements/p/an--local-youth-mentor-goes-on-to-graduate-from-csulb>.

¹³Lindsay Shepardson, "Christmas Morning," *The Valley News* 13, no. 52 (December 25, 2009), 18, accessed August 26, 2013, <http://www.myvalleynews.com/story/44196>.

¹⁴Community News, "Support Given to At-Risk Children," *The Californian* (February 6, 2008), B-2.

officers and the agents as the “good guys” and not as the “bad guys” who took their parents to prison.¹⁵

This outreach has attracted attention; a news article pointed out that it has been written that there are individuals who want to see change, but never do anything about it. But in this valley, Bob and Mona Davies of Community Outreach Ministry are doing something about it; they are caring, sharing and saving lives. Further, the article indicated that they have been recognized with awards for their outreach by local legislators, schools and law enforcement. The article detailed that these awards have been presented for breaking the cycle of crime, violence, delinquency, and abuse in children of prisoners; at-risk and needy kids. These children’s lives are being changed, renewed and empowered, and the program efforts are enhancing citizenship and enriching our local communities.¹⁶

The Project Proposal

This proposal focuses on the multiple risk factors and difficulties that children of prisoners struggle with and identifies them as hidden victims to the public, policymakers and funders.¹⁷ The problem was no stories addressing the children’s needs by the children of incarcerated parents existed in the literature. By not knowing the children’s stories, effective treatment and intervention has been inhibited. This ministry is compelled to

¹⁵Shepardson, 18.

¹⁶People In the News, “Non-Profit Receives Recognition Awards,” *The Valley News*, (July 2008), 19.

¹⁷Stacey Bouchet, “Children and Families with Incarcerated Parents: Exploring Development in the Field and Opportunities for Growth,” *The Anne E. Casey Foundation*, January 2008, 1-17.

defend these poor, innocent children from injustices and is rebuilding their lives through values clarification and the Gospel. An expected outcome of this project will be to inform intervention programs to help children break the cycle of incarceration.

California Watch estimates that there are over 1.7 million children with incarcerated parents across the country.¹⁸ California Research Bureau estimates there are 856,000 children who have had a parent in the California Adult Criminal Justice System who are falling through the cracks due to a lack of research and official information needed to fund useful interventions.¹⁹ Both parents and children suffer from the effects of incarceration and the children may dropout of school, be affected by delinquency, and potentially be incarcerated themselves.²⁰

According to *Riverside Weekly*, the county jails are overcrowded and there has been an increase in violence occurring against the staff as well as inmates attacking other inmates. Due to a state of California realignment, twenty four nonviolent county inmates are being released daily from county jails to make room for the state's violent convict population. According to published statistics approximately 11,000 prisoners have been released early from county jail since the realignment started in 2011.²¹

¹⁸Ryan Gabrielson, "Number of Children with Parents in Prison Growing," *California Watch*, (January 14, 2011).

¹⁹Simmons, 2.

²⁰Danielle H. Dallaire, "Incarcerated Mothers and Fathers: A Comparison of Risks for Children and Families," *Family Relations* 56, no. 5 (December 2007), 440-453, quoted in Sarah Schirmer, Ashley Nellis, and Marc Mauer, "Incarcerated Parents and Their Children: Trends, 1991-2007," *The Sentencing Project* (February 2009), 1-11.

²¹Richard, K. DeAtley, "Overcrowding of Jails Increases Violence," *Press Enterprise Southwest Weekly*, (July 25, 2013), 11.

Riverside County Demographics

Statistics indicate that Riverside, California has just over 2.1 million residents, and is also the fourth largest county in the state in terms of population.²² The largest ethnic group in the county is Hispanic at 46% who may be of any race.²³ Following unemployment trends nationwide, the county's unemployment rate has risen dramatically to a high of 14.7% in 2010. Hispanic and white students were the two largest groups among dropouts in 2010 (63% and 20% respectively). Compared to enrollment, Hispanic and African American student dropout rates are disproportionately high.²⁴ Federal law requires public school districts to report the number of students living in unstable conditions such as shelters, or unsheltered in cars, parks, campgrounds, and motels.²⁵ Families living doubled or tripled in a home due to economic hardship are the largest cohort, with 78% living in these conditions. During the 2011 school year, 49.1% of

²²Bob Buster and Daniel Foster, County of Riverside Community Foundation, "Riverside County at a Glance." *2011 Community Indicators Report*, Riverside, 2011, 1-68.

²³California Department of Finance, "Population by Ethnicity Riverside County, 2005-2010," *American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates (2004-2009) and Census Redistricting Data Summary File 2010*, 7

²⁴California Employment Development Department, "Unemployment Annual Average Rate, 2001-2010 and Monthly Rate, June 2011," *Employment by Industry Data; California Employment Development Department Historical Annual Average Labor Force for the United States; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*, 9.

²⁵California Department of Education, "Percent of Total Enrollment of Students Identified as Homeless Lacking Stable Housing County Comparison 2009-2010," *According to information provided by school districts on their Local Education Agency Reporting Form Title 1, Part A and Homeless Education Consolidated Application*, 39.

students were eligible for free meals and 10.9% were eligible for reduced-price school meals.²⁶

Residents in Riverside have the lowest percentage of uninsured people under the age of sixty-five and a high percentage of its residents typically delay care. Access to medical care varied by race and ethnicity, with Hispanics having the lowest rate at 75.0% and Asians having the highest rate at 99.7%; 85.8% of Anglos and 94.1% of African Americans reported having access to medical care.²⁷ One in twenty-five residents are alcohol dependent and an estimated 4% of the populations in Riverside aged twelve and older are alcohol dependent, while 2.5% are dependent on illicit drugs. Compared to the state average, Riverside teens are more likely to say that they binge drink, have tried drugs or alcohol in their lifetimes and currently use alcohol.²⁸ Child abuse and neglect reports for Riverside were comparatively high; in 2010, Riverside had the highest rate of substantiated child abuse and neglect referrals (11.8 per 1,000 children) compared to neighboring counties and the statewide rate. According to statistics provided by the University of California Berkeley the rate is 4.4 per 1,000 children²⁹ entering the foster

²⁶California Department of Education, "Children Eligible for Free or Reduced-Priced School Meals Riverside County and California, 2001-2010," *DataQuest*, 40.

²⁷County of Riverside, "Percent Uninsured (Under age 65) County Comparison 2009," *California Health Interview Survey, National Center for Health Statistics*, 42.

²⁸County of Riverside, "Percent of Youth Who Engage In Binge Drinking, Currently Use Alcohol or Have Ever Used Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) Riverside County and California 2007-2009," *California Healthy Kids Survey, 2007-2009 County Results, Main Report, WestEd Health and Human Development Program for the California Department of Education*, 44.

²⁹University of California Berkeley, "Substantiated Referrals and Entries to Foster Care County Comparison," *Child Welfare Research Center*, 48.

care system, making Riverside the largest contributor among neighboring counties and statewide.

Riverside's crime rate has shown a steady decrease since 2006 within the categories of both violent crimes and property crimes. In 2009, 53% of homicide victims were Hispanic, 21% were Anglo, 16% were African American and 10% were other.³⁰ Information provided by the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation indicates that Riverside has a higher proportion of paroled felons than the statewide average. In 2009, 8,785 felons were paroled or re-paroled for a rate of 413 parolees per 100,000 people, compared to 338 per 100,000 statewide.³¹ Gang activity is one of the most negative factors in Riverside. One tenth of Riverside's youth consider themselves members of a gang and 10% of seventh, ninth, and eleventh graders say they are gang members.³²

Synergy

Children of incarcerated parents need somebody to bring them the Gospel, and give them hope for the future. I remember growing up in a neighborhood where the families and children were victims of hopelessness and despair; young children were accessing drugs and alcohol, and copying wrong behaviors. These families were blinded

³⁰California Department of Justice, "Victims of Homicide by Race/Ethnicity Riverside County 2006-2009," *Office of the Attorney General, Criminal Justice Statistics, Special Request Unit*, 49.

³¹California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, *California Prisoners and Parolees, 2009*, 49.

³²Riverside County District Attorney Gang Prosecution Unit, "Youth Response to "Do You Consider Yourself a Member of a Gang? County Comparison 2007-2009," *California Healthy Kids Survey, 2007-2009 County Results: Main Report, WestEd Health and Human Development Program for the California Department of Education*, 50.

and held captive by Satan, who was leading the children to get high on drugs, steal, crash cars, fight in gangs, and often get sent away into incarceration. My neighborhood, and the people in it, were under the attack of evil and wickedness, and without knowing God, people did not know how to escape oppression.

In *The Substance of Things Hoped For*, Samuel Proctor is quoted as saying that we are living in times of crises, violence, and drugs, and many children will be incarcerated. Proctor says that we must reach back and help families who are spiraling down, to give them a hand up. He further said that churches must reach out and help the children and families spiritually and educationally, as this is key to their success. Most importantly, he said that we must reach the children with healing, mentoring and morals, to put faith back into the children and families. Proctor gave examples of mentoring and inspiring thousands of young people who have gone on to become doctors, lawyers, businessmen, and preachers. As a result of the efforts he describes, they did not become felons, or addicts but contributing and productive citizens.³³

God taught me to target the children, and the families will be saved. And He showed me that the poor communities are “gold mines”, with every child a diamond in the rough. In her writing, Tucker says that Wesley had expectations of Methodists to take relief to the poor, visit the sick, and find lost people. Wesley told his followers to follow him and bring the Gospel to the poor, as Jesus did in his days.³⁴ Wesley was a vital role

³³Samuel DeWitt Proctor, *The Substance of Things Hoped For: A Memoir of African—American Faith*, (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1995), xvi-xviii.

³⁴Karen Westfield Tucker, “Liturgical Expressions of Care for the Poor in the Wesleyan Tradition: A Case Study for the Ecumenical Church,” *Worship* 69 (1995): 53-54.

model for those of us who have obeyed and followed in his footsteps. He demonstrated how believers are to reach out to the lost people where they live, and bring them to Christ in every generation.

Due to the current magnitude of the issue, Sesame Street recently created the first Muppet to have a parent in jail, and a tool kit to educate and raise awareness of the children and families caught in the cycle of incarceration. In their campaign, “Little Children, Big Challenges,” the message is that children of incarcerated parents need attention and love in order to build a successful future.³⁵

In agreement with these messages, I have built Community Outreach Ministry, with the goal of going into the community to find the lost, broken and hurting children whose families are caught in the cycle of incarceration. Through the work of this ministry, once the children are “found”, they are “plugged into” week-long camps, and taken up into the mountains, out of their stressful environment, to rest. For an entire week, these children are given a bed to sleep in, all the food they can eat, and twenty-four hour per day access to a mentor-counselor. At camp, the weight of the world is taken off of the children’s shoulders. They need not to fear being evicted by the sheriff who may come at night and put them in the street, and the responsibility of raising their younger siblings is momentarily lifted from them. At camp they can play, have fun, be safe, and just be children.

³⁵Jesus Garcia, “Improving the Future for Children of Incarcerated Parents,” *Sesame Workshop* (June 13, 2013), 1-8.

Camp is where these children can breathe, enjoy the fresh air, make new friends, go on field trips, become a part of a dorm family, and learn to fall in love with Jesus. Every dorm family is coached to “team up and build up,” to get strong spiritually by singing and memorizing scripture verses from the Bible. After camp, they are “plugged into” Outreach by being invited to share their testimony and participate in singing to shut-ins. These children are also invited to earn community service credit for school by carrying flags in the Veterans Day Parade honoring all who have served. They get to volunteer and be a part of this ministry’s booth at Target’s National Night Out, by face painting other children’s faces. Caring adult mentors stay connected with the children, and help build their social and academic skills. Mentors act as coaches and cheerleaders, and help these children to build their vision and develop a plan for the future.

Community Outreach Ministry believes that meeting needs and sharing the Gospel with children who have been left behind by the incarceration of a parent is vital. These children need to know that they are not forgotten, and that is why this ministry is finding these children where they live and play to make sure that they do not “fall through the cracks”. Children are referred to this ministry by local government agencies, law enforcement, non-profits, schools and churches.

Over the years, there has been a pattern in the way that God has used me inside and outside of the church. Inside the church, God has gifted me with the ability to train believers in intercession and evangelism. Outside the church, God has given me the capacity to show believers how to “spy out the land” in the spirit, and to push back against the darkness to share the Gospel with people who do not know Christ. God has also gifted me with insights and strategies to develop and implement programs for the

children, and recruit volunteers, partners, sponsors and raise funds to support the ministry. All of this is designed to help the children to overcome obstacles, and barriers and to be winners and champions.

Stories of these children are shared with the media, who regularly contact the ministry for interviews. Over time, sharing some of these stories has resulted in invitations to share more in depth on radio and television. For example, a local television station has actually gone with me to visit a mother and her four children while the children's father was incarcerated. The mother explained during her interview how this ministry has helped her family at Christmas, and by sending the children to camp. At Christmas, the ministry adopts 200 children of incarcerated parents and provides an event at which they are the guests of honor. They receive clothes and fun toys to remind them of how much they are loved by God's family, the ministry's sponsors, and friends in the local community.³⁶

³⁶Ferrari Cruz, *Murrieta Television News*, April 21, 2009, Murrieta, CA.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STATE OF THE ART IN THIS MINISTRY MODEL

In every generation, God has positioned people on the earth to fulfill the Great Commission through the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit. My ministry model project is to reach children of incarcerated parents with interventions to avoid following their parents into incarceration. I believe my childhood, and my life experience in corporate America, as well as my twenty five years of serving God in urban missions has positioned me to do this doctoral dissertation.

In the writings of the Bible that are foundational to this project, Asaph, the Psalm writer during King David's monarchy, modeled prayer and intercession. Asaph stood in the gap for the children of Israel to be delivered from wickedness, restored to justice, and liberated; he interceded specifically for the poor children of Israel. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ was sent to preach the Gospel to the poor. The Holy Spirit has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor (Luke 4:18-19) in the same way the Lord has delegated his authority and power to all believers in every generation.

According to my historical foundations, Wesley modeled taking the gospel outside the church into the communities where the poor lived during the eighteenth century. Wesley told believers to follow him, as he followed Christ. Similar to the work of Wesley, my model is built on the concept of taking the gospel outside the church, to the poor in the communities where they live.

According to my theological foundations, Gustavo Gutierrez modeled the concept of using his life as a research tool for the poor in Peru, where he performed the duties of Pastor in Lima during the twentieth century. My life has also been my research tool for my work with the poor children of incarcerated parents where I have been a missionary pastor in Riverside, California. I am letting the children know they are greatly loved and valued by God and the family of God. Similar to Gutierrez, I am a voice for these children in my community.

The literature is related to this ministry model project regarding meeting the needs of children of incarcerated parents. This model is replicable state by state and nationwide as it pertains to children of incarcerated parents wherever they live. The project is a necessity, as it is meeting a significant need among this growing population. These children are among the highest at risk of becoming the next generation of inmates. The need to help break the cycle of incarceration as it relates to these children is greater than ever before, as “tough on crime” laws have multiplied the numbers of adults being incarcerated, and subsequently, the number of adults being incarcerated has exponentially increased the number of children left behind. Lessons learned from this project are providing qualitative insights for interventions and informing programs to help break the cycle of incarceration in children of incarcerated parents.

The Relevant Concepts to This Model of Ministry

The biblical concepts of prayer and intercession, as modeled by Asaph in centuries past, have been exercised by this practitioner against territorial spirits. Asaph’s prayers to God made territorial spirits flee, while declaring judgment against wickedness

and restoring justice to the children of Israel. Today, in my generation, the researcher is binding territorial spirits in Jesus' name and setting loose God's liberating spirit over children of incarcerated parents (Matthew 16:19). Children who have heard the gospel and have received salvation have improved outcomes in my context of ministry.

Wesley's historical concepts provided a comprehensive ministry for the poor. This ministry has also provided for the humanitarian needs of the poor through free emergency referral services. I have been making friends with the children of prisoners, and earning the right to share the gospel as a trusted friend. Through outreach, camping, and mentoring, the children have developed social, spiritual and educational skills. Through this model, the children's stories have been heard, documented and analyzed. This project has provided reliable evidence and insights to inform interventions to help break the cycle of incarceration, and it is giving the children a second chance to be winners and champions.

Gustavo Gutierrez, a liberation theologian left his world to enter into the world of the poor and to stand in solidarity with the poor children in Lima, Peru. Gutierrez and Paulo Freire, an adult literacy teacher, have developed new social, cultural, and educational structures, enabling the poor to escape dehumanizing conditions, and allowing them to be educated. Through this project, the practitioner has left her world to enter into the world of the children of incarcerated parents. The practitioner has also stood in solidarity with the children, as an advocate. Through my ministry's outreach, camping and mentoring programs, these children are able to lift their heads, and learn to believe in God. Their previous states of oppression and marginalization have been changed, and they have become achievers. Many of these children are the first generation

of Christians in their families; many have graduated from high school and university and have a career. God has prospered these children through the gospel, and he has given them a promising future.

Pertinent literature regarding other faith-based, state of the art ministry models has been researched for this project. Those ministry models include Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree program, and Awana Lifeline Prison Ministry, both of which are ministries that go into the prisons and into the communities to work with these families. The Children's Defense Fund and Freedom Schools are helping to elevate poor children's potential and dreams through reading in summer school. Amachi, in partnership with Big Brothers and Big Sisters of America, are using people of faith from churches to mentor children of prisoners to be transformed into children of promise.

Contemporary Educational Models

James S. Vacca, former Assistant Professor and Chairman of the Department of Special Education and Literacy in the School of Education at Long Island University, in his article, *Children of Incarcerated Parents: The Invisible Students in Our Schools – What Can Our Schools Do to Help Them?* stated that former President George W. Bush, in his State of the Union addresses in 2003 and 2004, indicated that there were 1.5 million American children with parent(s) in prison. President Bush said to the people of America that it is important for citizens to step up and contribute to these children whose parents are incarcerated. These children are put in a position where they need help

because they lack parental guidance. Americans, in their communities, are needed to reach out and help these children.¹

Vacca further mentioned that children of incarcerated parents are not the responsibility of any government agency or institution. Government agencies and institutions do not have any regard for this invisible population, nor are they required to offer these needy children any support services.² Vacca emphasized that these children need to have a home with caring adults, food and clothing, and need to be kept healthy and safe. Often, these children feel that they are to blame for their parent(s) being incarcerated, and they experience shame, embarrassment and stigmatization. Vacca said that schools are not told when a parent becomes incarcerated. Schools and educators find out only from the family, if the family chooses to tell the school. When they are informed, schools and educators are willing to assist students through school based programs.³

Communities In Schools

Earlier this year I participated in a webinar with Christian Association of Youth Mentoring (CAYM), undergoing training in supervising mentoring relationships. CAYM's speaker shared that her organization was supporting Communities In Schools with mentors for children of incarcerated parents. Communities In Schools is committed

¹James S. Vacca, "Children of Incarcerated Parents: The Invisible Students in Our Schools—What Can Our Schools Do To Help Them?" *Relational Child & Youth Care Practice* 21, no.1 (April 2008), 49-56.

²Ibid., 50.

³Ibid.

to keeping kids in school, and helping them succeed in life, and was founded in the 1970s by Bill Milliken, a youth advocate in New York City, to bring community resources into public schools nationwide. The model was originally adopted in 2004 and revised again in 2011 by the board of directors, with the hope of increasing the networking ability and serving more students with one-on-one mentors.⁴

Communities In Schools utilizes on-site coordinators who are employed by the school. Site coordinators are in a position to see the children every day and intervene immediately on their behalf to get them the community resources they need, including food, clothes, school supplies, tutors, mentors, health and family services, family counseling, job shadowing, and visits to colleges. Services are monitored and adjusted through on-going evaluation. Milliken believes the success of Communities In Schools can be attributed to how much care the children receive; it gives them a sense of belonging. "It is relationships not programs that change children."⁵

The Communities In Schools, national board chairperson, Elaine Wynn, of Wynn Resorts, makes reference in her 2011 annual report, to the economic crises our nation has experienced. She says that although unemployment is going down, the high school dropout rate is still a national problem, and those who do not have a high school education will have a tough time trying to find a job.⁶ Currently, Hispanics and African American students are at the highest risk of dropping out of school, and they will soon make up the largest population in America. It is therefore imperative that these children

⁴Maureen Salamat, ed., "Unlocking Potential: 2011 Communities In Schools Annual Report," (Arlington, VA: Communities In Schools), 1-44.

⁵Ibid., 2-3

⁶Ibid.

be educated and skilled. A lack of education makes our nation weak and lessens our ability to recover. This could have a negative ripple effect, as our nation may fall short of skilled laborers to expand and thrive in a competitive global market.⁷ The goal of Communities In Schools is to expand their network to reach those students who are at the highest risk of dropping out of school, to impact them to finish their education and prepare them for college.⁸

Freedom Schools

Freedom Summer Schools is operated by the Children's Defense Fund. Their goal is to educate and empower students by tearing down the "cradle-to-prison pipeline and reconstructing a new cradle-to-college track," focusing on education and freedom. Freedom Schools are created by schools, churches, and non-profits. In 2013 there were 181 sites in ninety one cities across the country to help the children be free from illiteracy, joblessness, low expectations and hopeless futures. Freedom Summer Schools are teaching children from elementary through high school levels to have a love for books and to excel in reading and academics. Many of the students participating in Freedom Summer School are the first high school graduates in their families and also the first to go to college.⁹ Children enjoy Freedom schools, as they are engaged with hands-on learning, and creative and performing arts. Students get to sing and clap their hands to the beat of the inspirational Hallelujah Chorus, and graduates from Freedom Summer School are

⁷Salamat, 6.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Lisa Ann Williamson, "No School Like Freedom School," accessed July 16, 2013, <http://www.tolerance.org/no-school-like-freedom-school>.

encouraged as alumni to be trained as servant leaders to teach the younger generation to be excited about school and learning.¹⁰

The Children's Defense Fund, in partnership with local schools, churches and non-profit organizations, is encouraging children to have a "Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Safe Start, and a Moral Start" and to transition into adulthood while accomplishing a well-rounded education. Summer Schools are six weeks in duration and meet from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm, Monday through Friday. The lessons are presented in a way that challenges the children to read and reflect on themes. The motto is: "I Can Make a Difference in: My Self, My Family, My Community, My Country, and My World with Hope, Education and Action." The children are served a nutritious breakfast and lunch, and go on field trips in the afternoons. Freedom Schools require parents to participate and invite family members to volunteer in the classrooms, during meals, and on the playground, and to chaperone the children during field trips. The parents and families also learn to contribute to their children's safety and health, and are encouraged to grow socially and educationally with their children.¹¹ Freedom Summer Schools have equipped children to read at grade levels ahead of their grade, and to have no loss of learning over the summer. Freedom Schools have also prevented children from dropping out of school and getting into trouble. Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools have enabled children to be more confident academically, spiritually and socially, giving them the tools and skills they need to graduate from high school and advance into college. Each

¹⁰Williamson, 26.

¹¹"CDF Freedom Schools: You Can Make a Difference," *Children's Defense Fund*, (2013), 1-9.

Freedom School has to raise their own finances and cover all of their own expenses for the program.¹²

Contemporary Social Models

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CCNCS)

In June of 2004, the Corporation for National and Community Service responded to President Bush through the combined efforts of local faith-based organizations and small community agencies and formed Senior Corps and AmeriCorps.¹³ These are initiatives of the Corporation for National and Community Service that target the specific needs of vulnerable children and youth with incarcerated parents. A program that falls under the Senior Corps initiative is the Foster Grandparents Program, in which senior volunteers serve as foster grandparents and mentors in schools and correctional institutions. Another similar program is the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) for tutoring teenagers. These initiatives are developing and mobilizing volunteers to meet academic needs in communities across the country.¹⁴

Mentors, working through Senior Corps, are contributing to children's social needs by spending time with the children, and by being a consistent friend. They provide an important role that helps the children feel secure. Having a caring adult friend enables

¹²"CDF Freedom Schools: You Can Make a Difference," 2.

¹³"Mentoring Children of Incarcerated Parents: A Toolkit for Senior Corps Directors," Links, Enrichment Academic Needs to Students Afterschool Programs (LEARNS), *Corporation for National and Community Service under a Cooperative Agreement Number 01CAOR0034*, (June 2004), 1-14.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 1.

children to interact in a social manner; it affords them the opportunity to have somebody in their life to talk to, listen to, look up to, and play with. Mentors can also recognize any special needs that the children may have, and get them connected to any additional resources they may need. Within AmeriCorps, VISTA workers are being developed into a powerful network of people to support the vital efforts of faith-based organizations and community agencies. It is the Senior Corps citizens who are the volunteer mentors being matched with the children of incarcerated parents. These programs are being utilized in more than twenty three states and fifteen urban communities across the nation.¹⁵

In July of 2013, I went to Summer School for Non-Profits presented by Wells Fargo and hosted by Loretta Sanchez, 46th District Congressional Representative. During that training conference, I learned about AmeriCorps, VISTA and Foster Grandparents. Among the useful points of information that I learned were the facts that AmeriCorps is for young people who are eighteen to twenty four years of age and transitioning into adulthood. These young people are eligible to get involved in real “hands on” experiences while serving in an eight to twelve month program. During their service, the young people are paid an allowance for their living expenses, including laundry, and they receive meals. This is a great opportunity for young people to develop skills and experience to prepare them for future positions. This can be an especially helpful program for youth who are eighteen years of age and are emancipating from foster care, as well as young people who may not be able to afford college or are not sure of what to do beyond high school. In addition, I learned that VISTA provides people power to non-profits and community-based organizations to expand their ministries and agencies.

¹⁵Links, Enrichment Academic Needs to Students Afterschool Programs (LEARNS), 1-2.

Lastly related to these organizations, I learned that Foster Grandparents are assigned to mentor children of incarcerated parents.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America is the largest secular mentoring organization in the United States. Their goals are to help children achieve their potential in education, avoid negative behavior, and improve their social capacities. Big Brothers was founded in the early 1900's by Earnest Coulter, a court clerk in New York City who saw a growing trend of boys coming into his court. Coulter discerned that these boys needed caring adults who would help them stay out of trouble, so he sought out and found volunteers to serve the boys as friends and mentors. Shortly thereafter, the Big Sisters organization was formed by Catholic women, to benefit girls. Coulter had a tremendous influence, and elevated public awareness of underserved children facing adversity in poverty and single parent homes, as well as children with incarcerated parents. Because of Coulter's work, many of these children would now have mentors.¹⁶

A seven year impact study of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America was initiated in 1988 and released in 1995. The study was conducted by Public/Private Ventures of Philadelphia, and included eight of the organization's largest agencies. The report was re-issued in September 2000, and contains scientifically reliable evidence that mentoring as a social intervention has been effective and has had positive outcomes. Specifically, the study found that Little Brothers and Little Sisters were 46% less likely to initiate drug use

¹⁶John Hansen, "Big Brothers Big Sisters of America," *The Social Welfare History Project*, accessed July 16, 2014, <http://www.socialwelfarehistory.com/organizations/big-brothers-big-sisters-of-america-3/>.

during the study period, 27% less likely to initiate alcohol usage during the study period, and more competent about doing their school work.¹⁷

Contemporary Spiritual Models

Amachi

In 2000, Public/Private Ventures and John Dilulio became the creators of the new *Amachi* program with the vision of using church members to mentor children of incarcerated parents in Philadelphia. The name *Amachi* came from a staff member of Public/Private Ventures. *Amachi* is a Nigerian word for hope from the Ibo people meaning “who knows but what God has brought us through this child.”¹⁸ John Dilulio Jr., a compassionate Catholic conservative, wanted to get people of faith involved in a secular national problem to show the value the church and people of faith can have in America. Dilulio was a political scientist and a professor at the University of Pennsylvania. He was also a board member of Public/Private Ventures and a board member of Prison Fellowship. Dilulio and Public/Private Ventures had the idea of partnering with Prison Fellowship to access the names of the children of prisoners from Angel Tree. However, Prison Fellowship wanted to own the project. Public/Private

¹⁷Joseph P. Tierney, Jean Baldwin Grossman, and Nancy L. Resch, “Making a Difference An Impact Study of Big Brothers Big Sisters,” *Public Private Ventures* (September 2000), ii.

¹⁸Thomas J. Smith, “The Least of These: Amachi and the Children of Prisoners,” *Public/Private Ventures* (July 31, 2012), 1-23.

Ventures had conceived the idea and acquired the funding and they considered this their project.¹⁹

So Public/Private Ventures and Dilulio sought a person of faith with great management capabilities to be the senior advisor for the model. Dilulio specifically wanted to use the faith-based community to serve a critical secular need, using the church members to mentor the children. Dilulio also wanted to see this project expand beyond Philadelphia. The creation of Amachi was funded by The PEW Charitable Trust of Philadelphia. Dare Mighty Things provided Amachi with technical support and training. Public/Private Ventures identified that they would consider the project successful if they were able to make 100 matches between children and mentors within the first year. In 2000, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Philadelphia were managing 150 matches per year.²⁰

Dilulio asked the former mayor of Philadelphia, W. Wilson Goode, Sr. to serve as the senior advisor of Amachi. Goode was so amazed that he responded with, "I will be the Chief Executive Officer and President of Amachi." Wilson Goode was the first African American mayor to serve the city of Philadelphia for two terms (1984-1992). Prior to being mayor, he was the city's managing director and was politically well connected in Philadelphia.²¹

Also significant to Dilulio was the fact that Goode was a minister, earned a Doctor of Ministry from Palmer Theological Seminary, and was a professor at Eastern University. Goode brought life to Amachi by getting permission from the prison

¹⁹Smith, 4.

²⁰Ibid., 5.

²¹Ibid.

managers to access the inmates. He used the chaplains to gather the inmates together to hear about the mentoring project. The incarcerated fathers were not receptive, but the mothers were, and Goode acquired the names and addresses of 400 children through the incarcerated mothers. The fathers resisted because they thought the mentor would take the place of the parent.²²

Then Goode went into the African American churches in Philadelphia and divided the churches in the city into four districts of ten churches each. Goode asked the churches for ten members per church to be mentors. The churches were willing, but the pastors were already stretched. Goode agreed to help the pastors by funding a part time coordinator at every church to work with the mentors. For every ten churches, Goode provided a district manager. The church coordinators reported to the district managers and the district managers reported to Goode. Once Goode had acquired the 400 mentors from African American churches, it was time to make the matches. Big Brothers and Big Sisters of America, headquartered in Philadelphia, provided experienced staff to screen, train, and supervise the matches with integrity.²³

In 2001, Dilulio became the head of a new federal agency, the Office of Faith-Based Initiatives. It was created under incoming President George W. Bush, and he served there for one year. In Bush's 2003 State of the Union Address, the President said the children of prisoners needed mentors, and asked for men and women in America to meet the need. In 2003, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) committed \$9 million to support programs for mentoring children of prisoners. The

²²Smith, 5.

²³Ibid., 7.

President set a goal to mentor 100,000 children by 2006 and indicated that he wanted to raise \$100 million, but \$50 million was funded.²⁴

In 2010, the Department of Health and Human Services lost their funding for mentoring children of prisoners. And in May of 2012, due to a lack of funds, Public/Private Ventures closed their operations after thirty five years of social services to the poor. Goode is still fundraising to help mentoring programs for children of prisoners. The Amachi model has grown across fifty states and 250 cities and has served more than 300,000 children of inmates.²⁵

Goode shares in “The Least of These: Amachi and the Children of Prisoners” that, “Everything I have learned in life was for the purpose of Amachi.”²⁶ Goode has a *Riverbed Speech* that he uses for accessing mentors and for fundraising. His speech is symbolic of the children of Israel crossing over into their promised land with Joshua. The priests had to go into the Jordan River first and when their feet entered the waters, God parted the waters for the children to cross over safely. The mentors and the funders are making it possible for the children of incarcerated parents to cross over into their promised land. Goode says he “will continue to stand in the “riverbed” until all children of prisoners have left their wilderness experience and have crossed over into their Promised Land.”²⁷

²⁴Smith, 9.

²⁵Ibid., 11.

²⁶Ibid., 20.

²⁷Ibid., 21.

Prison Fellowship—Angel Tree Program

My organization, Community Outreach Ministry, has joined forces with Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree program. Prison Fellowship is a unique faith-based ministry operating nationwide and in fifty countries worldwide. It reaches incarcerated parents with bible studies, re-entry programs, and community service projects. Prison Fellowship was founded by Chuck Colson, with Gordon Loux, in 1976. Colson, a former presidential aide to President Nixon, was convicted in the Watergate scandal. He was also known as President Nixon's "hatchet man".²⁸ Before going into prison, Colson received Jesus Christ as his Lord. Once in prison, he made a promise to help the inmates and their families to be regenerated through the gospel.

Angel Tree is a ministry which reaches out through churches, to the children of incarcerated parents, and "adopts" children to give them gifts at Christmas. Angel Tree also offers churches partial scholarships to send these children to camp, and provides materials to assist church volunteers to serve as mentors. In addition, Angel Tree works with faith-based and mission organizations like my ministry.

I had already been reaching out to high risk children whose parents were incarcerated and providing them an annual Christmas party, as well as sending these children to summer camp. A pastor friend met me for lunch and explained the Angel Tree ministry to me and described that it went hand in hand with what I was already doing. The difference was that they were a nationwide organization, whereas I was doing outreach to this population in my local community. My ministry was able to adopt more

²⁸Louis Peitzman, "Chuck Colson, Nixon's Hatchet Man Turned Evangelist, Died at 80," accessed May 7, 2014, <http://gawker.com/5904045/chuck-colson-nixons-hatchet-man-turned-evangelist-dead-at-80>.

children for Christmas by accepting names from Angel Tree, and this past Christmas, 200 children were adopted.

The Christmas party is a friendly way to meet the children and their families. At this party, the children are treated like royalty because they are greatly valued by God and this ministry. A hot meal is served to these guests and families. Every one sings Christmas carols and listens to the Christmas Story, as told by a red-headed ventriloquist dressed in festive clothes.

Volunteers from the local middle schools sponsor a chocolate fountain for the children to dip their fruit and candy in, and the children decorate cookies and cupcakes with sprinkles. Fire fighters display their fire engine, and give the children a tour of their truck. California Highway Patrol employees bring a car loaded with gifts and personally pass out gifts to the kids. United States Border Patrol brings about twenty Explorers to set up and pass out gifts. This party is truly backed by the entire community. It is the citizens and local businesses that buy the gifts. Also at the party, the children watch camp videos, and sign up for summer camp.

Camp scholarships provide a way for the children to leave their stressful environments for a week, and get away to have fun. The children get to go up the mountain, swim in the lake and go boating. They make new friends with their “dorm family” and engage in team activities. The children feel accepted and develop a sense of belonging to their dorm family. They learn that the camp staff loves and cares for them. The campers can relate to each other and share each other’s stories. This experience helps them to have hope in God for their future. Children love singing songs to Jesus, learning scriptures and winning prizes. On top of the mountain, the children have time to let God’s

word soak into their spirits. It is here at camp where they have unbroken time with their mentors, and raise their expectations for the future. All the campers look forward to coming back to camp and being mentors when they reach the age of eighteen.

Awana Lifeline Prison Ministry, Malachi Dads, Returning Hearts, and Awana Club Meetings

Malachi Dads teaches the Bible to the fathers who are incarcerated at Angola State Prison in Louisiana. Through Malachi Dads, the fathers' spirits are strengthened and they pray for their children and families to be reconciled.²⁹ Every year, the Returning Hearts ministry holds a celebration that allows all of the Malachi Dads to come out of their prison cells to spend the day with their children. During the celebration, the fathers get to lead their children to the Lord:³⁰ "And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers" (Malachi 4:6).

Hannah's gift was created in 2012 by a chaplain with the goal of helping incarcerated mothers to learn the Bible and to be responsible moms.³¹ Awana provides Bible based and recreational activities for children and offers opportunities for children to meet in local churches. As of 2011, there were 22,000 Awana clubs meeting in churches across the country. These clubs serve as an outreach into the local community and bring the good news to children between the ages of two and eighteen.

²⁹Awana Lifeline, "Malachi Dads," Awana Lifeline, accessed May 7, 2014, <http://awanalifeline.org/#/programs/malachi-dads>.

³⁰Awana Lifeline, "Returning Hearts," accessed May 7, 2014, <http://awanalifeline.org/#/programs/returning-hearts>.

³¹Awana Lifeline, "Hannah's Gift," Awana Lifeline, accessed May 7, 2014, <http://awanalifeline.org/#/programs/hannahs-gift>.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Biblical Foundation

This research paper will examine Psalm 82:3-4, an Old Testament text written by Asaph, a Levite priest, who speaks about the corruption of religious leadership during that time in history. Additionally, this paper will review the New Testament text, Luke 4:18-19, which takes place in Nazareth, in a synagogue, on the Sabbath day when Jesus was handed the book of Isaiah, and read His defined ministry to the poor.

These texts define God's desire to destroy wickedness, release people from oppression, and defend the weak and needy. Because poor people are important to God, He obligated Himself to protect and care for them. To ensure this, God sent Jesus to restore justice to the poor and weak, including the orphans and widows who had been mistreated. He sent Jesus to take over this obligation by bringing good news to the poor, proclaiming freedom to the captives, bringing recovery of sight to the blind, and releasing the oppressed.

Further, this document will examine ancient Near Eastern religions in regard to their laws and codes of justice. This review will specifically look at their efforts to protect the widows, orphans and poor from unscrupulous judges who showed partiality to the landowners and the rich.

Old Testament Literary Structure

The Psalms were written over a period of centuries, and have been used as a hymn book in Jewish cultic worship in the temple and synagogue. There are one hundred and fifty Psalms in the book of Psalms. In the Hebrew Bible, the book of Psalms lacked a general title, however, “Psalms” in Hebrew means “a song sung to a musical accompaniment,” “praises,” or “songs of praise.” William Sanford LaSor identified Psalm 82 as one of a collection of twelve Psalms authored by Asaph, son of Berekiah, the Gershonite. Asaph means “Yahweh has gathered,” and He is from the tribe of Levi. The book of Psalms, in its final format, has been divided into five sections. These five sections were probably patterned after the five books in the Pentateuch, and are a collection of prayers, poems, hymns, and laments, written over a thousand years of Israel’s history. The sections include: (1) 1-41 Genesis, (2) 42-72 Exodus, (3) 73-89 Leviticus, (4) 90-106 Numbers, and (5) 107-150 Deuteronomy. Each of these five sections ends with a doxology. These doxologies give praise for what has been revealed about God in each book.¹

The Psalms are Holy Spirit-inspired, for the worshiper communes with God in praise, adoration, thanksgiving, or in cries of help. The Psalter includes a range of literary types which suggests different functions. In the 82nd Psalm, Asaph, the authoritative speaker, is petitioning Yahweh to arise as the righteous judge to assume His role of provider of justice, and declare judgment on the wicked gods.²

¹William Sanford LaSor, *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament*, ed. Frederic William Bush et al., (1982; repr., Nashville, TN: William B. Eerdmann Publishers, 1996), 430-431.

Arthur Weiser commented on Asaph's powerful vision, which is like Isaiah's account of His call in the temple of Jerusalem. The psalmist focused his thoughts on Yahweh and visualized Him as He stood forth in the midst of the "assembly of the gods" in heaven to deliver judgment on His celestial subjects.³

The gods who had been entrusted with the office of rulers were now standing before the judgment seat of God. God's patience had run out, and the verdict was in; the gods would die like human beings. God would no longer tolerate the unjust ways the judges had been administering justice, and the partiality they had shown to the wicked. Injustice and wickedness were the real issues on the earth; in God's judgment His verdict to destroy the wicked judges was the solution to the problem. Through the psalmist's trust and faith in God, Yahweh came to rescue His people.⁴

Vision

James E. Smith described Yahweh coming to the defense of His people of Israel at home and abroad. In his vision, Asaph was standing, on behalf of God's people, in the temple. He saw God destroy the wicked judges who oppressed the poor, and overthrow the foreign enemies who had intended to overthrow God's people.⁵ This vision was similar to that of the prophet Isaiah, who saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted. Asaph was portrayed as pleading to God to defend and rescue the weak,

²LaSor, 431.

³Arthur Weiser, *The Psalms* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1962), 558.

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵James E. Smith, *The Wisdom Literature and Psalms*, Old Testament Survey Series, (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Company, 1996), 349-350.

fatherless, poor, and to deliver them from the hand of the wicked, as well as restore justice, and judge the wicked gods.

Asaph's literary units of thought were arranged and structured by themes: verses 1-4 are an indictment of the judges, while in verses 5-7, God accuses the judges of being influenced by powers of darkness and pronounces judgment that the gods shall die like common people. God determined that He would judge the rulers who maintained a world system of oppression and injustice. Verse 8 is an exaltation of the supreme judge of Israel, the almighty ruler of the universe, and a plea to him to take possession of all nations, as their sovereign God.⁶

Godliness Overthrows Wickedness

The Canaanite and ancient Near East pattern of the hierarchical assembly of the gods had a god-president who sat on the throne of the heavenly council, surrounded by the other gods.⁷ Erich Zenger dated this Psalm to the early postexilic epoch. The psalm is set in the assembly of the gods, belonging to the Canaanite gods of the ancient Near East. The gods had perverted justice to injustice, and injustice in turn was proclaimed as justice.

This was visible in the fact that the guilty, the evildoers, and the violent remained unpunished, favored, and honored. The point of the reproach is that the gods themselves

⁶Smith, 350.

⁷Erich Zenger et al., "Psalm 82," *Psalms 2: A Commentary on Psalms 51-100 (Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible)*, vol. 2, ed. and trans. Frank Lothar Hossfeld, Erich Zenger, Klaus Baltzer and Linda M. Maloney (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2005), 332-333.

took part in this perversion of justice and misuse of power.⁸ The wicked judges violated social justice and the rights of others by being oppressive and greedy. They engaged in plotting against the poor people, widows, and orphans, to seize their property. They were even willing to commit murder to achieve their goals. The wicked gods threatened the community, were dishonest in business dealings, and hated God.⁹

The gods walked in darkness, and the light of righteousness was lacking; they had no insight into justice and righteousness. They wandered in darkness, injustice, and evil so that the foundations of the earth were shaken, a condition that forced Yahweh to intervene. Yahweh had to put an end to the wicked gods, judges, rulers, religions and their political systems, and declare judgment.¹⁰

God stands against wickedness because wickedness is contrary to His nature.¹¹ Richard L. Harris used keywords to describe wickedness as being wrong and tied to sin and injustice. According to him, wrong is also called, “unjust,” and “guilty,” and forsakes God’s word. The evil of people’s words, thoughts, and deeds destroys the inner harmony of people; bad people mistreat good people.

⁸Zenger et al., 333.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid., 334.

¹¹Richard L. Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1980), 863.

Ancient Near East Religions

In the *Holman Bible Handbook*, David Dockery and contributing editors, Trent Butler, Christopher Church, Linda Scott, Marsha Ellis Smith, and James Emery White, and authors indicate that there are not many written records about the beliefs and practices of ancient Near East religions, except for a drawing on a cave wall or a piece of pottery here and there that appear to have had a cultic use. Religions that date back prior to 2500-3000 B.C. left no texts, and must therefore remain the subject of conjecture. Israel's faith however, is accurately recorded in the Old Testament.¹²

Religious practices in Mesopotamia were closely related to the cultural convention, political activity, and economic interchange of the time period. These practices were inseparable, and converged at the local temple. The temple was centrally located within each major city, and was known as a ziggurat. The ziggurat had stairs that ascended toward the sky, which the people climbed in an attempt to get closer to the gods. Kings and priests recorded temple activity, and their writings constitute the primary historical data used today for reconstructing secular and religious aspects of that society.¹³

Mesopotamians believed in polytheism, the belief and worship of many gods, unlike Israelites, who believed and worshipped only one God. The Mesopotamian pantheon was well organized, however the multiple gods' responsibilities were poorly

¹²David S. Dockery et al., "Ancient Near Eastern Religions," *Holman Book of the Bible*, CD-ROM (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publisher, 1992), 38, Logos Library System 4.0.

¹³Ibid.

defined and overlapped with those of other gods, so that it is difficult to reconstruct ancient beliefs.¹⁴

The ancient Mesopotamian deities were associated almost exclusively with the physical realm, and issues that plagued humanity. No single god had ultimate authority, and the lines of responsibility were not clearly drawn. Their worshipers were obliged to appease many gods in order to gain their protection and prosperity.¹⁵

Syro-Palestine religions in the Fertile Crescent around 1400 B.C. focused primarily on fertility. Baal was the male god, and Asherah was the female fertility goddess; Dagon and Molech are other familiar gods that are mentioned in the Old Testament. Infertility of crops resulted in hunger for the population. Infertility of animals and people resulted in economic loss. This lack of socioeconomic security meant that the people were never further than one failed crop away from potential starvation.¹⁶

Egyptians were the most religious of idol worshipers. Their texts that have survived are primarily texts that describe, in general, the beliefs of the people at the time the pyramids were constructed. The Egyptians, like the Mesopotamians, worshiped objects in the physical realm as the embodiments of deities, such as the sun god Re and other solar deities.¹⁷

¹⁴Dockery et al., 38.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., 40.

¹⁷Ibid.

All of the religions of the ancient Near East stand in sharp contrast with the monotheism of the Old Testament, which attests to the Lord as the one God, creator, redeemer, source of all life and the object of our adoration and worship.¹⁸

Historical Background

According to Richard Patterson, the motif of providing for the widows, orphans, and poor people surfaced in each of the ancient Near East religions, everywhere and at the same time. In ancient Mesopotamia, the protection of the widows, orphans and the poor was detailed in two well-known law codes, that of Urukagina of Lagash in the twenty-fifth century B.C. and that of Ur Nammu, the founder of the so-called third dynasty of Ur in the twenty-first century B.C.¹⁹

The most famous law code of Mesopotamia was the Code of Hammurapi in the eighteenth century B.C., which was built upon the concept of its Sumerian precursor. Hammurapi affirmed that the gods had called him to make justice appear in the land, destroy the evil and wicked, ensure that the strong might not oppress the weak, and to give justice to the orphans and widows.²⁰

Protection of the weak in Egypt and Mesopotamia was regarded as a virtue of kings and rulers, as well as an important part of the duty of the sun-god.²¹ In ancient

¹⁸Dockery et al., 40.

¹⁹Richard D. Patterson, "The Widow, the Orphan and the Poor in the Old Testament the Extra-Biblical Literature," *Journal of Bibliotheca Sacra* 130, no. 19 (1973), 226-229.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Patterson, 226-229.

Egypt, the protection of the widows, orphans, and the poor was the continual boast of the king. King Merikare, of the First Intermediate period, was instructed by his father, Khety III, that a good king does not oppress the widows or confiscate the property of orphans. Ramesses III, of the twentieth dynasty, boasted that he gave special attention to justice for the widows and the orphans.

In the Syro-Palestinian culture, the motif of providing for widows, orphans and the poor people was also the constant claim of the ideal king. Their loyalty to this high ethical idea is further demonstrated in an inscription of a steward of Amenemhat's successor, Sesostri I, who wrote, "I was a father to the orphans and a helper to the widows."²²

Israelite concern for widows, orphans, and poor people was permanently woven into the fabric of the Pentateuch as well. This is evident in the covenant made between God the sovereign, and His people of Israel, both in regard to the covenant code of Sinai and its renewal before entering the land of Canaan.²³

In Exodus 22-23, the widows, orphans, and poor fall under the protection of God Himself. This is reiterated in Deuteronomy 10:18, where God is represented as the supreme judge who has the interest of these elements of society at heart. This motif of caring for widows, orphans and poor applied also to the set feasts of Israel.²⁴

²²Patterson, 227.

²³Ibid., 228.

²⁴Ibid.

Social Background

According to Gowan, in his exploration of this motif in the Old Testament, God established social justice prohibiting the defrauding of widows and orphans, sojourners, and the poor. Individuals could be judged as righteous or wicked by how they treated widows, orphans, and the poor. One of the earliest social concerns was the protection of orphans and widows from unscrupulous people who frequently attempted to thwart the efforts of these vulnerable people to maintain themselves.²⁵

Poverty was a plight that might befall anyone, but there were certain groups of people who were powerless for reasons other than poverty. For example, a family without a male adult would find it difficult to survive. In each of the ancient Near East cultures, the god of justice and the king were expected to look out for the widows, orphans and poor people because the structures of society left them extremely vulnerable.²⁶

The widows, orphans and poor were dependent on the good will of others because of their physical limitations, and the worst problem that these groups had in common was powerlessness. They lacked social status and respect, and this often resulted in them becoming easy marks for the powerful to seize their property. An orphan child could inherit property, but then he or she faced the problem of how to maintain those resources.²⁷

²⁵Donald E. Gowan, "Wealth and Poverty in the Old Testament: The Case of the Widow, the Orphan and the Sojourner," *Interpretation* 41, no. 4 (1987), 341-353.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 343-344.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 341-353.

Old Testament writers were mainly concerned with the injustices that were done to the poor. During that time period, the judges ruled unscrupulously and showed partiality to the rich. Justice was perverted, the judges took bribes, and the poor people had no one to defend them. What the poor people had in common was their inability to maintain their rights, the experience of being oppressed by others, and the reality of being denied justice because they did not have the power to insist on it.²⁸

As John Yeats stated in *The Biblical Model of Adoption*, though Israelites once suffered as the lowest in Egyptian society, they were not to forget that God spared them from their circumstances and redeemed them unto himself. God heard their cries and their appeals for help and promised swift action.²⁹

In the Old Testament, the entire community is commanded to care for the needs of the least of these in their midst; the care of orphans became the responsibility of the entire community. In Proverbs 23:10, God cautioned, “Do not remove the ancient boundary stones nor encroach on the fields of the fatherless.” According to the Hebrew Scriptures, God becomes the surrogate Father (or surrogate husband in the case of the widow) to protect Israel’s rights. When the cause of the wicked oppresses the orphans or widows, God promises swift judgment against those He identifies as His children.³⁰

²⁸Gowan, 347.

²⁹John M. Yeats, “The Biblical Model of Adoption,” *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 49, no. 1 (2006), 65-79.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 67.

Further, God's concern for poor people is clearly carried into the New Testament, as evidenced by Jesus receiving His command to take the Gospel to the poor.³¹

Jesus' Ministry in Galilee

In his writing on Luke, Robert H. Stein stated that Luke described the beginning of Jesus' ministry as it began in Galilee. In His first sermon at Nazareth, Jesus announced that He was anointed by the Holy Spirit to bring salvation to the poor. Jesus intentionally found the place in the scroll where Isaiah prophesied the coming of the Messiah, the servant to meet every human need.³² The quote from Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me," refers to the Holy Spirit, who descended upon Jesus like a dove when He was baptized by John the Baptist. Luke highlighted the importance of this announcement by saying that the eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fixed on Him.

Jesus was anointed "to preach good news to the poor" and to those most in need of divine help from God. "He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners" means that the anointed one will make widely known, with authority, that the captives will be set free. Jesus was sent to bring "recovery of sight to the blind" in order for the blind to see again.

The Messiah's ministry was "to release the oppressed" and deliver them from their enemy. The Messiah was commissioned "to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor,"

³¹Yeats, 67.

³²Robert H. Stein, *Luke: New American Commentary*, 24, ed. David S. Dockery, CD-ROM (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 151-155.

not a calendar year, but the period in time when salvation would be declared.³³ In the New Testament, the year of the Lord's favor is the time known as the year of jubilee, when Jesus Christ started His public ministry. In the Old Testament, the year of jubilee was a year of celebration and liberation, when debts were canceled, property was restored to the rightful owners, and prisoners were liberated from captivity.³⁴

Jesus, the Messiah, applied Luke 4:18-19 to Himself; these verses represent His mission statement, as mandated by His Heavenly Father, to preach the gospel to the downtrodden, the outcasts, and the unattractive people in society.³⁵ In Jon Courson's *Application Commentary*, he stated that Isaiah 61:1-2 is an Old Testament prediction of the coming Messiah that was fulfilled in the New Testament.

According to Merrill Unger, Luke presented Jesus as the Son of Man when he wrote his gospel from Caesarea during Paul's imprisonment there, around A.D. 58. The books of Matthew, Mark and Luke constitute the Synoptic Gospels, "synoptic" meaning "seeing the whole together at a glance."³⁶ These three gospels, in contrast to John, present a common story and relate substantially the same incidents in the life of Jesus, with some omissions, additions, and differences. The portrayal which best fits the facts and honors the Christ of the Synoptic Gospels is that which the Holy Spirit presents, without contradiction through three different human writers, the one Messiah-King, Servant

³³J. Reiling and J. L. Swellengrebel, *Luke: A Translator's Handbook on the Gospel of Luke*, CD-ROM (New York, NY: United Bible Societies Handbook Series, 1971).

³⁴I. Howard Marshall, "The Ministry in Galilee," *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, CD-ROM (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1978).

³⁵Jon Courson, "A Most Magnificent Message," *Application Commentary New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2003), 312.

³⁶Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Bible Handbook* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1996), 511.

Savior, and God-Man. Each presents Him in a different light, for a particular purpose, but the threefold presentation is of the one and same divine-human Person.³⁷

In his exploration of the Gospel of Luke, Robert Utley indicates that this Gospel was written in A.D. 95 to Theophilus, and it is the longest gospel, with the largest number of verses, in the New Testament. Luke was a highly educated, second-generation Christian, and a physician.³⁸ Additionally, Luke was the author of the Book of Acts.

The Gospel of Luke emphasized Jesus' love and particular care for those whom the Jewish leaders never noticed: the women, the poor, and the people who were socially, racially and religiously excluded. In addition, Luke described certain care to certain groups of people and detailed that the poor people were Jesus' highest priority.³⁹ Further, Luke recorded the eye witness memories of Mary, and possibly her genealogy.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research paper was to examine and provide exegesis of two texts, one from the Old Testament, and one from the New Testament. This review detailed that in Psalm 82:3-4, Asaph was appealing to God in prayer and intercession for justice. While in prayer, Asaph had a breakthrough in the spiritual realm and saw God in a vision; through this vision, Asaph received God's victory. Judgment was declared against the wicked judges, rulers, and gods, and wickedness was overthrown and

³⁷Unger, 511.

³⁸Robert J. Utley, *The Gospel According to Luke*, Study Guide Commentary Series 3A, (2004; repr., Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 2011), 1.

³⁹Ibid.

destroyed. Justice prevailed, and God's preferential option for the poor was restored.

Jesus came, according to the account in Luke 4:18, in response to Asaph's prayers.

The review of Canaanite, Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Syro-Palestinian and Israelite religions demonstrated that each of these religions had their own god(s). These gods were charged with the protection of the widows, the orphans and the poor people in society. However, the religious leadership was corrupted, and the people were defrauded and oppressed. Thus it was necessary for Asaph to ask God to declare judgment against wickedness, and restore justice to Israel and to the nations of the world.

The verses explored in this paper reveal that God demolishes evil, liberates people from oppression, and protects the weak and needy. Further, Jesus provides restitution and justice to the poor, the weak, the widows, and the orphans who have been wronged. God bound Himself through Jesus to fulfill His commitment to give good news to the poor and downtrodden, declare liberty to the prisoners, restore sight to the sightless, and again usher in the year of the Lord's favor. As it was necessary for Asaph to ask God to restore justice, it is similarly necessary for me to pray for judgment against wickedness, and for the restoration of justice to the children of incarcerated parents.

Historical Foundations

John Wesley provided a vital model for Christians, taking the gospel outside of the church and reaching out to lost, poor, prisoners, and spiritually neglected people. The project entitled, "Breaking the Cycle of Incarceration: Stories of My Work as a Missionary to Children of Incarcerated Parents," is patterned after Wesley's example, as it is taking the gospel outside of the church and into the communities, and reaching out to

the most at-risk children, many of whom have been abandoned, abused and neglected by their incarcerated parent(s).

The project is moving the gospel to where the children are, inside their homes and communities. These children are innocent victims of injustices, through no fault of their own, and many appear to be in hopeless and helpless situations. The project will provide qualitative insights to inform treatments and interventions, helping to break the cycle of incarceration.

This research paper will examine the life of Wesley, the man who sparked and ignited the Methodist Movement and Methodism. Wesley grew up in a Christian home, learning Christian disciplines at an early age. He always looked for ways of improving, reforming and transforming lives.

The Holy Club, described in detail below, is an example of the way Wesley made commitments; through his work in this group, he took the gospel to the sick in prison, weekly, throughout his life. From the prison, his preaching moved to unconventional methods, reaching the lost in the community. As the spiritual conditions of the people were elevated, so were their leadership capabilities. Some of Wesley's followers became involved with reforming industry standards for child labor laws, and enhancing human living conditions for prisoners.

The Wesleyan movement swept across England and into the colonies of America, and an evangelical awakening was occurring on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. Today, Methodism is a worldwide denomination that keeps gaining momentum.

John Wesley a “Brand Plucked From the Burning”

Wesley’s parents had nineteen children, and John Wesley was the fifteenth to be born. In *Wesleyan Transformations*, there is a comment that Wesley’s mother referred to him as a “brand plucked from the burning.”⁴⁰ This burning is in reference to a Holy Spirit fire in Wesley’s home at Epworth, England. Wesley is described by Matthew Simpson as a descendant of a long line of active ministers of the Church of England. Though Wesley was one of a large family which possessed but meager means, his education was highly valued and treasured. His mother was a devout teacher, and imparted into his youthful mind Christian standards and the fundamental branches of English education. His mother scheduled Thursday evenings to have quality time and fellowship with him every week. Wesley was extraordinarily bright and energetic.⁴¹

After age thirteen, Wesley entered the Charter House School in London, where he had outstanding teachers and associates. Wesley, a high achiever, received a scholarship to Oxford University. He was exceptional in his studies, and tutored students in the Greek language. Wesley was selected a Fellow in Lincoln College. He was highly intelligent and demonstrated classical taste.⁴²

According to the *Cyclopedia of Methodism*, at age twenty-four, Wesley was ordained a priest in the Anglican Church and he continued taking classes at Oxford, where he enjoyed the campus atmosphere. After his ordination, he assisted his father who

⁴⁰Earl D. C. Brewer and Mance C. Jackson, Jr., *Wesleyan Transformations* (Atlanta, GA: ITC Press, 1988), 15.

⁴¹Matthew Simpson, “Wesley, John (1703-1791),” *Cyclopedia of Methodism*, (1880; repr., Philadelphia, PA: Louis H. Evert 1876), 912-913.

⁴²*Ibid.*, 912.

was a curator in Epworth. Wesley's father encouraged him to become a curator and accept responsibilities in the church, however, he wanted to do something more challenging, and made the famous statement, "The world is my parish."⁴³

Wesley was an innovator with extraordinary organizational capabilities. He was determined to preach Christ as Savior, and to change the lives of people, nations and churches. Yet, there were times when Wesley struggled with his Christian faith⁴⁴ until he received the gift of grace through faith, according to Brewer and Jackson.

Holy Club

Howard Clark Kee and co-authors, in *Christianity: A Social and Cultural History*, refer to the Wesley brothers as being set on reforming their church and determined to take the gospel outside the church to the poor people who were not saved.⁴⁵ In 1729, Charles Wesley and a few intimate friends, Robert Kirkham and William Morgan, created a group that committed themselves to meet regularly to build their faith. The group became known as the Holy Club at Oxford University, and it was later joined by John Wesley and George Whitefield.

The members of the Holy Club had implemented a systematic way of nourishing their spiritual life with prayer, fasting and partaking in the Lord's supper on a consistent basis. In addition, the Wesley brothers, George Whitefield, and the other Holy Club

⁴³Simpson, 912.

⁴⁴Brewer and Jackson, 15.

⁴⁵Howard Clark Kee et al., "Methodist Christians," in *Christianity: A Social and Cultural History* (New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1991), 517-518.

members strategized about how to serve poor people with good works. They became known by their nickname, the “Methodists.”⁴⁶

In 1735, Wesley became a missionary sent to witness to the Indians in the new colony of Savannah, Georgia in America. Wesley was accompanied by his brother, Charles, and a small team of Holy Club members. They went to evangelize the Indians, but after two years, John returned to London, disappointed and profoundly impacted by being ineffective at reaching the Indians.⁴⁷

This trip to America, however, changed the direction of John Wesley’s life. On the ship back home, Wesley met some Moravian settlers that interested him spiritually. They dialogued, and Wesley was astounded by their faith in Christ. The Moravians were not afraid to die when their ship was in turbulent waters. Wesley observed how calmly the Moravians sang hymns. As a result of communicating with the settlers, Wesley discovered that he was lacking in his faith. In his *Journal* he entered, “I went to convert the Indians: but oh, who shall convert me?”⁴⁸ Back home in England, Wesley went to the superintendent of the Moravian Brethren to acquire a deeper understanding of their faith. Wesley asked Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, the head of the Moravian Brethren, for spiritual guidance while visiting the Moravian community in London. Zinzendorf told Wesley to preach faith until he believed in it, then to preach it in faith.

⁴⁶Kee et al., 517-518.

⁴⁷Ibid., 518.

⁴⁸Ibid.

Wesley's Heart Strangely Warmed

Mark Galli and Ted Olsen comment in their book that after speaking with another Moravian friend, Peter Bohler, Wesley acknowledged he had lacked faith. Wesley conceded that though he had tried to be solely dependent on Christ, he had missed the mark, stating, "I was indeed fighting continually, but not conquering. I fell and rose, and fell again."⁴⁹

On May 24, 1738, Wesley had an experience that made all the difference in his spiritual life. Wesley described in his journal how he received the gift of grace through faith in Jesus Christ:

In the evening, I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for my salvation: and an assurance was given to me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.⁵⁰

R. G. Tuttle, in his article located in the *Dictionary of Christianity in America*, stated that once Wesley received an evangelical awakening, he became aware that the ministry of the Methodists could be empowered by grace or the work of the Holy Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ. As Wesley listened to the advice of Moravian Peter Bohler, an evangelical revival broke out in England within less than a year, and lasted until well after Wesley's death in 1791.⁵¹

⁴⁹Mark Galli and Ted Olsen, *131 Christians Everyone Should Know* CD-ROM, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2000), 182.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹R. G. Tuttle, "Wesley, John (1703-1791)," *Dictionary of Christianity in America*, ed. Daniel G. Reid et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 1241.

Toward the end of 1739, Simpson explained, eight to ten friends approached Wesley asking him to pray with them for advice on “how to flee the wrath to come.”⁵² Wesley agreed to pray with his friends, and reflected on the Thursday evenings his mother spent with him as a young boy. At the first meeting, twelve friends came to pray. Then the group grew to forty, and soon to one hundred. The Thursday evening prayer service was named “watch night” when one night, at about three in the morning, the power of God manifested upon those who were there praying. They were engulfed with an incredible feeling of joy, and many fell to the ground. When they were able to stand up, they praised God in unison.

During another “watch night” service, Simpson records that God gave Wesley the assurance that He was going to do great things among those praying. God made a way for Wesley to put into motion the necessary arrangements to launch the Methodist societies. God also laid the foundation for Wesley to acquire a church in Bristol, and buy a building in London called “the Foundry” that would be used for worship services.⁵³

The New Voice

Maldwyn Edwards informs readers that after Wesley’s awakening, he was refreshed, invigorated and empowered. Wesley went back to Oxford University, to St. Mary’s parish, to minister the good news that he had experienced, stating, “By grace are ye saved through faith.” However, when the authorities at the University listened to what

⁵²Simpson, 913.

⁵³Ibid.

Wesley said, they disagreed, and Wesley could no longer minister from their pulpit at St. Mary's.⁵⁴

Wesley's message was the manifesto of the new revival. The Church of England rejected the new message, and informed John and Charles Wesley and their associate, George Whitefield, not to come back to the Anglican Church. Instead of being devastated, these revivalists were led by the Holy Spirit to go to the spiritually neglected and the poor people in society.⁵⁵

In 1739, Whitefield went to Bristol, and finding the pulpits closed against him, reached out to the colliers at Kingswood in the open air. The results of open air preaching were so astonishing that Whitefield sent for Wesley. At first, Wesley questioned the forum of outdoor preaching, but seeing its results, he speedily started preaching to the multitudes of common people. The crowds grew from 10,000 to 50,000 people, and they came from different parts of England and Scotland to hear Wesley preach. These people worked as coal miners, weavers, and artisans. Open air preaching evolved into meetings in private homes, called societies. When the people out grew one society, more societies were birthed, which lead to the Methodist Movement. In 1740, the movement was named Methodism.⁵⁶

⁵⁴Maldwyn L. Edwards, "Wesley, John." *The Encyclopedia of World Methodism 2*, ed. Nolan B. Harmon, Albea Godbold and Louise L. Queen (Nashville, TN: United Methodist Publishing House, 1974), 2497-2499.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 2497.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*

The Methodist Movement - Open Air Preaching

Open air preaching was a significant phenomenon indicative of the revival that occurred. Initially, Whitefield ministered in the fields to miners in Kingswood, near Bristol, and great multitudes of spiritually neglected people came to hear God's word. However, when he was leaving for America, he asked Wesley to take over.⁵⁷

On April 2, 1739, Wesley became known as the "soul that over England flamed."⁵⁸ George Whitefield's preaching stimulated an awakening on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. And it was these dedicated disciples of the Evangelical Revival who gave birth to the Methodist movement, and Methodism.

The attacks against the Wesley brothers and Whitefield by the church gave the movement wide visibility, and raised compassion from the general public. These negative accusations cultivated genuine believers to be attracted followers of the movement, and to spread it even farther. The movement grew exponentially, and societies were formed, especially in the midst of centers easily accessible to serve the populations.⁵⁹ Wesley's followers knitted together in societies to learn about spiritual and social disciplines.

Wesley had always thought of himself as a minister of the Church of England, but now, he was disillusioned with the churches' lack of care for the spiritually neglected and poor. Brewer and Jackson mentioned that the Church did not send out bishops, priests and lay leaders to help provide aid or to develop programs for the poor people.⁶⁰ Wesley

⁵⁷Edwards, 2497-2499.

⁵⁸Ibid., 2497.

⁵⁹Ibid., 2499.

⁶⁰Brewer and Jackson, 40-41.

wanted to see the Church of England come to grips with the emerging needs and changing circumstances of the poor people in England's growing industrialization process.

While Wesley was unwilling to leave his church, he and his followers were forced to engage in practices which were contrary to its principles. Wesley saw that the Church of England was disconnected from the poor, but that he himself was connected to them and they were attracted to him. Wesley did not blame the poor people for their poverty, but helped them to improve their social and spiritual conditions.⁶¹

In their writing, Brewer and Jackson painted a picture of Wesley as a model for providing outreach to the lost, sick, poor, imprisoned and spiritually neglected. Wesley ministered in outdoor fields, within the Anglican parishes, and in unclean places. As a result, peasants were leaving feudal manors to hear Wesley preach. The working and living conditions for these people were horrible. There were no laws protecting children and women and no standards for working hours, wages, or conditions. Drunkenness, thievery, smuggling, and other such sins were common, as the poor preyed on each other. Wesley gathered helpers and lay preachers about him as assistants, and ordained preachers within the Wesleyan movement. Wesley did this to offer Christ to the multitudes, and to relate to the spiritual, social, and human needs of people caught in the miserable economic and social circumstances of his day.⁶²

Wesley's most significant contributions to the movement did not flow from the unconventional outreach, however, but from his formation of societies. The societies

⁶¹Brewer and Jackson, 40.

⁶²Ibid., 28, 41.

resulted in an improvement in the people's living conditions. Many of the early Methodists became leaders in the new labor movement, in political activities, and in other ways to improve societal conditions. The result was, in effect, creating a church within a church. Wesleyan Methodism was never woven into the fabric of the Church of England. Instead, the societies and class meetings, and their leaders, became transforming elements in the formation of a new sect.⁶³

Societies

Wesley did not have any preconceived idea as to how to form a new denomination. However, historical circumstances and his methodological capabilities successively led to the societies. When these societies became too large for the members to care for one another, Wesley organized classes with eleven members and a leader for each group. Classes met weekly to pray, read the Bible, discuss their spiritual lives, and to raise finances for charity. Men and women met separately, but anyone could become a class leader, according to Brewer and Jackson.⁶⁴

In the book, *131 Christians Everyone Should Know*, one of Wesley's most famous aphorisms is quoted. He is said to have stated, "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can."⁶⁵

⁶³Brewer and Jackson, 28, 41.

⁶⁴Galli and Olsen, 183.

⁶⁵Ibid.

Wesley intentionally avoided holding meetings at the same time the Anglican services met, but the bishop of Bristol still objected. Wesley answered, “The world is my parish,” a phrase that later became a slogan of Methodist missionaries.

Wesley then organized his believers into a connection, and a number of societies into a circuit, under the leadership of a superintendent. Periodic meetings of the Methodist leadership and lay preachers developed into an annual conference, where those who were to serve each circuit were appointed, generally for three-year terms.⁶⁶

An article in the Wesleyan Theological Journal, *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral*, by Albert C. Outer, emphasizes that doctrinal agreement was of primary importance with Wesley, and a necessary standard for the Methodist societies. Thus at Wesley’s first general conference in 1744, with his associates, the first questions he explored and discussed involved what they would teach, how to teach, and how to organize doctrine, discipline and practice. All the leaders agreed that these questions were appropriate for an established church.⁶⁷

As the Methodist Movement developed and expanded, Wesley furnished it with pertinent resources: sermons, letters, tracts, exegetical notes, journals and a monograph on *Original Sin*. The doctrinal standards came out in 1763, and were called the “Model Deed.” Included in this “Model Deed” were the sources of authority in the Wesleyan

⁶⁶Galli and Olsen, 183.

⁶⁷Albert C. Outer, “The Wesleyan Quadrilateral-In John Wesley:” *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, 20, no. 1 (Spring 1985), 7-18.

heritage known as the “Wesleyan Quadrilateral,” the four guidelines were specifically Scripture, Tradition, Reason and Experience.⁶⁸

Wesley’s working precepts of doctrinal authority were distinctly organized and dynamically balanced. When challenged on his authority, on any question, Wesley’s first appeal was to the Holy Bible. He instructed his preachers to preach no other doctrine than what is included in Scripture, *Wesley’s Notes Upon the New Testament*, and four volumes of *Sermons*. In Wesley’s view, tradition involved a fresh infusion of spiritual understanding being revealed as a wealth of insight into a believer. Tradition was also related to asking the church elders, who had been graced with experience and wisdom, for the meaning and interpretation of Scripture.⁶⁹

In addition to tradition and scripture, Wesley added reason and experience as foundational for the Holy Spirit to speak into the human soul and spirit. Reason is being rational about what is right and wrong according to Scripture, and doing what is right. Experience is something every Christian encounters when they come into the knowledge of receiving Christ as their savior and Lord; it is having certainty that by grace are you saved through faith in Christ, and knowing that your sins are forgiven. This assurance leads to energizing the heart to do love in action.⁷⁰

According to Albert C. Outer, this fourfold guideline is deeper than was realized, and is intended to be more fruitful for modern theologizing. It holds to the supreme primacy of Scripture, it profits from the wisdom of heritage, it accepts the truths of

⁶⁸Outer, 7-18.

⁶⁹Ibid., 8.

⁷⁰Ibid.

critical reason, and emphasizes the Christian experience regarding the gift of grace through the saving faith in Christ.⁷¹

Methodism

Wesley's success was due to adding his Methodist beliefs to the heritage of the Anglican Church, with revisions as he saw fit. This movement had an impact, and Wesley created a church separate from the Church of England. Wesley demanded of his followers that they be disciplined communities of true believers, an expectation above and beyond the Anglican tradition of the church as *corpus mixtum*.⁷²

Prior to Wesley's evangelical awakening, he had disagreed with the Church of England's doctrine of justification by faith, then later amended his mistake and accepted the doctrine of faith. Along with the tradition of Anglican baptismal and regeneration, Wesley included conversion and the new birth. To the Anglican prayer book, Wesley added field preaching, itinerancy, formation of societies, and class meetings. Regarding the Anglican tradition of the natural alliance between church and state, Wesley disagreed with the concept of membership as a voluntary association. Wesley hoped his followers would follow him as he followed Christ, and take the gospel to the lost and spiritually neglected people in their communities.⁷³

⁷¹Outer, 10.

⁷²Ibid., 11.

⁷³Ibid.

Care for the Poor

Karen Tucker quoted Wesley's expectations that the Methodists would not simply send relief to the poor, but would actively go and engage the sick in the ministry, and credits him with stating, "I visited as many as I could of the sick. How much better is it, when it can be done, to carry relief to the poor than to send it?"⁷⁴ According to Wesley's texts, ministry to the poor was to be provided regularly by his followers who came together for worship, and each one was to give to the poor according to the individual's ability, at the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Descriptions of servant roles for deacons, the elders, and the superintendent, were provided by Wesley with stated expectations of their work. This was for the benefit of leaders, so that they could focus on their areas of responsibilities. All of the leaders were given the task to search for the sick and the poor people, treat the people with compassion, care for the stranger, strengthen the weak, heal the sick, and set the captives free.⁷⁵

Comparable duties were also given to those in authority to care for young and old, strong and weak, rich and poor, and to lead God's people in obedience to fulfill their God-given mission in the world. Ordained ministers of the gospel were also delegated with the dual responsibilities of outreach to the downcast, and equipping baptized believers to go out and preach the gospel.⁷⁶

⁷⁴Karen Westfield Tucker, "Liturgical Expressions of Care for the Poor in the Wesleyan Tradition: A Case Study for the Ecumenical Church," *Worship* 69, (1995), 55, 60.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, 55.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 60.

In Jennings view, Wesley had a heart for poor people and focused on meeting their needs. He provided bread for the hungry and clothes for the needy. When the well-to-do people showed up at his meetings with gold jewelry and fancy clothes, he deliberately preached on the dangers of riches and on selling all of one's possessions and giving the money to aid the poor. Wesley turned away from the prosperous in order to minister to the poor people.⁷⁷

Wesley chose to begin to preach where God began, among the poor, the despised, the oppressed and the marginalized. He was well acquainted with the plight of the poor; he made it a regular routine to get to know each person. He was not content to just preach, rather, he begged for their food and clothing and raised money to pay teachers to teach academics to the children. Wesley was adamant that not one penny would go to him for his personal needs, for church buildings, nor for the pastor's salaries.⁷⁸

Wesley's practice of visiting the poor was designed to break down barriers between the classes, so the prosperous would become aware of the needs of the poor, and develop programs to come to their assistance. He instituted practical ways to help the poor by organizing health care facilities, cooperatives and credit unions to help the families with aid. Further, he believed the gospel was not just good news, but was demonstrated through providing assistance to accommodate the physical and spiritual

⁷⁷Theodore W. Jennings, Jr., "Good News to the Poor in the Wesleyan Heritage," in *Theology and Evangelism in the Wesleyan Heritage*, ed. James C. Logan (Nashville, TN: Kingswood Press, 1994), 139-145.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 143.

needs of the poor people. Wesley sought to make the welfare of the poor the central focus of the Methodist movement.⁷⁹

The Prison Ministry of John and Charles Wesley and the Early Methodists

Jesus told his followers that when they visited the imprisoned they were really visiting Him. Charles Yrigoyen, Jr. commented that, “Prisoners need to be visited above all others, as they are commonly in solitary confinement and forsaken by the rest of the world.”⁸⁰ Wesley encouraged all Methodists to follow Jesus’ direction to do right to all, but he and Charles were also outstanding examples for his followers to engage in visitation and care for prisoners.⁸¹

Wesley’s prison ministry began while he was the leader of the Holy Club at Oxford. Wesley’s father had also encouraged John to visit the prisoners, as his father had been in prison for debt in 1705, and reflected back on his ministry to fellow prisoners with great satisfaction. Wesley’s father recommended that John first seek the approval of those who had authority over the prisoners, and counseled him to obtain the approval of the Bishop of Oxford. The Bishop approved the request, and John and Charles launched the ministry of prison visitations.⁸²

⁷⁹Jennings, 144-145.

⁸⁰Charles Yrigoyen, Jr., “I was in Prison and You Visited Me: The Prison Ministry of John and Charles Wesley and the Early Methodists,” *Evangelical Journal* 29 (Spring 2011), 11,13-14, 22-23.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, 13.

⁸²*Ibid.*

Wesley was extremely careful to document prisoner visitations in his journals and diaries, especially his visits to those who were facing capital punishment. There were at least four important factors which brought about the start of his mission to those behind bars, including Jesus' command to visit the prisoners, the commitment of the Oxford Holy Club to prison visitation, the encouragement of his father in this ministry and, observing God at work in the lives of many—not all—who were visited.⁸³

By modern day standards, the eighteenth century English justice system was abusive toward the captives. Many prisoners died in prison due to hunger and typhoid fever. During Wesley's visits with the prisoners, he engaged the inmates in prayer, preached, and urged repentance and trust in God's forgiving grace. He counseled, and occasionally administered the Lord's Supper.⁸⁴

Wesley and his followers demonstrated a simple evangelical approach to prison ministry.⁸⁵ They were not there to reform the prison conditions, nor were they against the ruling authorities, but they hoped to plant seeds in the minds of followers to improve the justice system. Their visits were strictly spiritual, and they had a deep passion for the personal salvation of every prisoner who faced execution. In Charles Wesley's "Prayers for Condemned Malefactors," he stated that the people in authority did not care for the prisoner's dependents, spouses, and children left behind, unsupported, unloved and bereaved, or for the loss of life.⁸⁶

⁸³Yrigoyen, Jr., 11, 14.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵Ibid., 22.

⁸⁶Ibid., 22-23.

Conclusion

Based on this research, Wesleyan Methodism is a model for taking the gospel outside of the church to reach the prisoner, their children, the poor, the oppressed, and the spiritually neglected and uneducated. Wesley cared that the prisoners had the assurance of grace through faith in Christ before they were hanged. Wesley's unconventional church ignited the spark that started the Wesleyan Movement, and Methodism has become increasingly stronger over the centuries, sweeping across barriers, borders, races, and nations.

The project, "Breaking the Cycle of Incarceration: Stories of My Work as a Missionary to Children of Incarcerated Parents," is based on Wesley's model which is relevant today for reaching out to children of incarcerated parent(s). Through this project, children receive services targeted at prevention, intervention, and direction to raise their expectations for the future.

Theological Foundations

The doctrine of the person and work of the Holy Spirit constitutes the theological foundation for this project, "Breaking the Cycle of Incarceration: Stories of My Work as a Missionary to Children of Incarcerated Parents", conducted in Riverside, California. The two contemporary theological traditions from the twentieth century that have influenced this project are the Pentecostal and charismatic movement's theology of the out pouring of the Holy Spirit, and the Catholic liberation theology. The Holy Spirit has both illuminated the differences between these two theological traditions, and shown how they can work together through the operation of this project.

This project is dependent upon the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit from the Pentecostal and charismatic tradition to reach the children with the gospel. From the perspective of liberation theology, the role of the missionary is comparable to the role played by the activist priests. This ministry has been working effectively for twenty-five years, and is meant to be replicated by other missionaries in the context of their own ministries.

The purpose of this proposed project is to capture, document and analyze multiple stories of the researcher as well as those researched, (including the adult children of incarcerated parents, the parents themselves, and the children's caregivers). These stories provide qualitative insights to inform interventions for these children to help break the cycle of incarceration.⁸⁷ Three areas of influence that have been identified as being crucial to the survival of children of incarcerated parents include social, spiritual and educational.

The Doctrine of the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

In his work, Bruce A. Ware has defined the roles of the Trinity as that of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Though each person in the Trinity is co-eternal with the others, the Father is first, the Son is second and the Holy Spirit is third.⁸⁸ Each is fully, equally and harmoniously God. Each has one divine and identical nature, and a distinct task and relationship that exist in the Triune Godhead.

⁸⁷John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2009), 112.

⁸⁸Bruce A. Ware, "The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: The Trinity as Theological Foundation for Family Ministry," *Journal of Family Ministry* 1, no. 2 (Summer/Spring 2011), 6-13.

The Father is the supreme authority among the Persons of the Godhead and is responsible for creation and redemption. The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of humankind and to make atonement for sin. The Holy Spirit empowered Jesus to perform miracles and to die for our sins. Jesus was raised from the grave by the Holy Spirit. After Christ had arisen from the dead, the Father sent the Holy Spirit to endow believers with the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire (Luke 3:16, Acts 2:1-4 NIV).⁸⁹

This outpouring occurred on the Day of Pentecost, an annual Jewish festival also known as the “Day of First Fruits,” a celebration of the first buds of the harvest. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself was the first bud of the New Testament harvest, when He arose from the dead and burst from the grave. Then in fulfillment of the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the disciples and they were endued with supernatural power to proclaim the gospel. Millions of souls have become the harvest.⁹⁰

Sean Kealy states that the third person of the Trinity is the Holy Spirit, who has been prominent in guiding history through the ages. It is the Holy Spirit who provided priests, prophets, kings and other workers in God’s Kingdom with spiritual power to fulfill God’s mission on the earth. In the Old Testament, for example, the gift of prophecy was manifested through Joseph to interpret dreams and to see into the future.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Ware, 6-13.

⁹⁰ Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services as They Were at the Time of Jesus Christ*, CD-ROM (2010; repr., Cambridge, UK: James Clarke & Co Ltd., 1986), 384-385, Logos Library System 4.0.

⁹¹ Sean P. Kealy, s.v. “Holy Spirit,” in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers, and Astrid B. Beck (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 601.

The Spirit's power was evident at the height of Israel's theocracy as He worked through the judges, the kings and the prophets. In fulfillment of prophecy, God poured out His Spirit to turn His people's hearts of stone into hearts of flesh. God was seeking to transform the hearts of His people to abide by His covenant for their peace and protection (Isaiah 59:21 and Ezekiel 36:26-27 NIV).⁹²

According to Michelle Tooley, justice was a principal characteristic of God, and so a community was evaluated by their treatment of the orphans, widows, poor and oppressed. The Old Testament biblical tradition was alive with examples of men and women who brought justice through God's Spirit to situations of oppression and injustice. Since justice is rooted in God's character, justice is what God demands from all of His followers, yesterday, today and always.⁹³

Jesus was exalted to the right hand of God and received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit. Thus, as Michael Welker says, Jesus became the "bearer of the Spirit," bringing justice, mercy, and universal knowledge of God among the Jews and the Gentiles as foretold in prophecy (Joel 2:28-32 NIV).⁹⁴ For in Christ, there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, and the same Lord richly blesses all who call on Him (Romans 10:11 NIV).

When the Holy Spirit fell upon the disciples on the Day of Pentecost, they were able to speak with different languages that were known to people from other nations and

⁹²Kealy, 601.

⁹³Michelle Tooley, s.v. "Justice," in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers, and Astrid B. Beck (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishers 2000), 757.

⁹⁴Michael Welker, s.v. "The Holy Spirit," *The Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology*, ed. John Webster, Kathryn Tanner, and Iain Torrance, (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007), 237.

cultures. The Spirit fell in such a way that those who had been baptized in the Holy Spirit could also see the manifestations of the Spirit's presence in cloven tongues of fire. God's Spirit was sent to men and women, the young and old, and to all races and cultures.⁹⁵

The Pentecostal/Charismatic Tradition

Stanley M. Horton, a Pentecostal theologian states that as soon as the Holy Spirit had fallen upon Jesus, He submitted Himself to the Spirit's leading and fasted forty days. Satan tempted Jesus to create bread out of stones, but He resisted Satan by declaring God's Word, and conquered His enemy. Jesus won a complete victory, and set the example for believers to defeat the adversary.⁹⁶

When Jesus' fast had ended, He returned in the power of the Holy Spirit to Galilee, where God's anointing was manifested in His teaching ministry. The Spirit's anointing opened up the people's eyes and understanding so that they were able to see Jesus' authority and power with clarity. The news of the Messiah's preaching and healing ministry quickly spread. While Jesus visited a synagogue in Nazareth, He read from Isaiah 61:1 to proclaim the mission that He had come to fulfill.⁹⁷

C. Peter Wagner indicates that the beginning of the classical Pentecostal movement happened during a "watch night" service on December 31, 1900. In Topeka, Kansas, evangelist Charles Parham laid his hands on Agnes Ozman, a Bible school

⁹⁵Welker, 237.

⁹⁶Stanley M. Horton, *What The Bible Says About the Holy Spirit* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1989), 93, 95.

⁹⁷Ibid., 95.

student. The Holy Spirit was poured out upon her, and she received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire that was evidenced by speaking in tongues, a charismatic gift.⁹⁸

In 1906, the Pentecostal movement led to the famous Azusa Street revival, and birthed several new Pentecostal churches and fellowships. These new denominations were ignited under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and included the Assemblies of God, Fellowship of Christian Assemblies, Pentecostal Holiness, Church of God in Christ, Church of the Foursquare Gospel, and others. Parham, in many ways, was considered the theological father of this modern day Pentecostal renewal that had started in the Los Angeles area and moved across America like fire.⁹⁹

The roots of the charismatic movement go back to 1960, when Dennis Bennett, pastor of St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Van Nuys, California, announced to his congregation that he had experienced a new outpouring of God's Spirit. This was a fresh outpouring that began the charismatic movement, and from that point, the gifts of the Holy Spirit were being manifested among Anglicans and Catholics alike.¹⁰⁰

Wagner describes the 1980s and 1990s as an incredible time for the charismatic Christian community. He maintains that the 1990s are on record as the decade which witnessed the greatest out pouring of spiritual warfare prayer, perhaps in all of Christian history. Consequently, since that time, a new presence of the Holy Spirit's power has

⁹⁸C. Peter Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1994), 14.

⁹⁹Ibid.

¹⁰⁰Dennis Bennett and Rita Bennett, *The Holy Spirit and You* (Plainfield, NY: Logos International, 1971), 78.

been working, through supernatural power ministries, to expand church growth and increase compassion for the poor and oppressed.¹⁰¹

In 1988, Fuller Theological Seminary hosted a spiritual warfare symposium and invited distinguished leaders from the evangelical community to attend. These leaders were from Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal seminaries, and Bible colleges representing many denominations from around the country. They came to hear about spiritual warfare prayer and power encounters. Power encounters are conflicts that occur as a natural part of living in the Kingdom of God. Through spiritual warfare prayer, intercessors supernaturally encounter Satan, destroy his authority and cast out demons, heal the sick and oppressed, bring unbelievers into salvation, and set the captives free. Jesus' public ministry began with a power encounter, described in Mark 1:21-28, during which Jesus sternly told a demon to come out of a man. The evil spirit shook the man violently, and came out of him with a shriek.¹⁰²

This symposium heightened to a new level of understanding the ways that the weapons of the church, as described in the Bible, "are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds" (2 Cor.10:4 NIV). As Wagner says, if the battle is in the spirit, and if it is real, then the church needs to know how to fight and win. Through Spirit-led revelation, the body of Christ has been given the gifts to destroy evil and restore justice.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹C. Peter Wagner, *Supernatural Forces in Spiritual Warfare* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, 2012), 10-11, 18-19, 37.

¹⁰²Ibid., 10, 37.

¹⁰³Ibid., 18.

Also through this symposium, leaders were inspired to train students in seminaries and Bible colleges for spiritual battle. The symposium presenters urged their audience to always remember that the church must take the offensive through the Holy Spirit to have assurance of victory. “And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross” (Col. 2:15 NIV).¹⁰⁴

How the Gifts of the Holy Spirit Work in Spiritual Warfare

Spiritual warfare has been described by C. Peter Wagner as being fought on three levels. The first level, or the ground level, consists of casting out demons, while the second, the occult level, includes dealing with demonic forces such as witchcraft. The third level is the strategic level, that is, confrontation with high ranking principalities, powers and rulers, as described by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 6:12. Pentecostals and charismatics recognize that the spiritual realm contains “territorial spirits” which have a direct effect on what happens in the physical realm. Territorial spirits are wicked rulers assigned by Satan to prevent the spread of the Gospel. Satan will take control over the walls and gates of the cities, nations, and neighborhoods, as well as groups of people, social networks, and institutional structures to keep the captives bound.¹⁰⁵

Dean Sherman says that the Old Testament is an excellent authority for intercessors to consult for training in spiritual warfare prayer. Sherman indicates that the battles Israel fought against opponents in the physical realm are the same battles the body of Christ fights today in the unseen realm. In the Bible, walls represented protection and

¹⁰⁴Wagner, *Supernatural Forces in Spiritual Warfare*, 19.

¹⁰⁵C. Peter Wagner, *Confronting the Powers* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1996), 22-23.

authority in society;¹⁰⁶ the spiritual and physical walls around a city were there to protect God's people from enemy attack. The enemy sees when the walls and structures in society are broken down, and he will take over and rule that territory. Today, prayer is a powerful weapon used in the battle against Satan that drives back evil, and causes the enemy to flee. Spiritual walls also encompass families, marriages, schools, trade unions and churches. It is important that Christians pray to build spiritual hedges of protection surrounding these social structures, and reinforce spiritual walls and spiritual gates around God's people.¹⁰⁷

Spiritual warfare is the work of confronting evil spirits and canceling Satan's ploys. Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 18:18 NIV). As intercessors bind Satan's power, they simultaneously loosen God's opposing spirit of salvation and liberation in its place. Binding and loosening is a biblical principle taught by Jesus to His disciples to tear down demonic power and replace it with God's supernatural power.¹⁰⁸

The Catholic Liberation Theology Tradition

According to Leonardo Boff, liberation theologians in Latin America were opposed to the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit. However, these theologians

¹⁰⁶Dean Sherman, *Spiritual Warfare for Every Christian*, (1990; repr., Seattle, WA: Youth With A Mission Publishing, 1995), 96, 168-169.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 96.

¹⁰⁸Sherman, 168-169.

recognized poverty as sin, and sin as evil that had to be conquered. Sin was producing injustices, exploitation and oppression among the poor. The Catholic priests rose up in solidarity with the poor and oppressed people, in practical ways, to create new orders of social, political, cultural, and educational structures designed to help liberate the people. These theologians absolutely believed in the God of the Exodus as their liberator and had the assurance that God would save the needy and destroy the oppressor (Psalm 82:2-4 NIV).¹⁰⁹

Gustavo Gutierrez is known as the founder of liberation theology, and he has lived and worked among the poor people in the slums of Lima, Peru. In 1968, at the historical conference in Medellin, Columbia, the movement that promoted the “preferential option for the poor” was given the name “liberation theology.” The bishops agreed that the majority of Latin Americans were living in poverty, and they concurred that the Catholic Church workers should use the Freirean educational approach for adult learners.¹¹⁰

In his educational approach, Paulo Freire argued that the social conditions were the cause of illiteracy among the poor and oppressed. His methodology of adult education encouraged men and women to be proactive in their world, through action and reflection, in order to transform it. His problem-posing educational methods enabled the illiterate

¹⁰⁹Leonardo Boff, *Saint Francis: A Model for Human Liberation*, trans. John W. Diercksmeier (New York, NY: The Crossroads Publishing Company, 1982), 60-61.

¹¹⁰Gustavo Gutierrez, “The Task and Content of Liberation Theology,” *The Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology*, ed. Christopher Rowland, trans. Judith Condor (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 19-29.

poor, as learners, to participate actively in liberating themselves from the conditions that oppressed them.¹¹¹

Freire's quest has helped the oppressed to transform the structures of injustices. In 1962, Freire taught sugarcane workers to read and write in forty-five days, through adopting a concept of women and men as conscious beings, and posing problems of critical intervention in reality. Freire's revolutionary methodology took the life situation of the learner as its starting point, and the raising of consciousness and overcoming of obstacles as its goals. When peasants learned through Freire's concepts, they were filled with a new dignity and hope, and when they realized they were educated, they became people of culture. They represented a new social change and development, overcame the old limiting structures, and took themselves into the modern world.¹¹²

In his writing on religion among the marginalized, Boff explained that integral liberation was liberation of the entire human being. He detailed that human beings in Latin America were socially oppressed, requiring justice and democracy to defend themselves in their struggles for personal freedom. He maintained that these individuals struggled for the right to be a part of the human race with a voice, and to have a presence in society. Boff further stated that they needed leaders to enter into solidarity with them for social and historical liberation, to remove injustices, and to help them obtain justice. These people struggled for their rights to life, health care, education, reformed working

¹¹¹Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (1979; repr., New York, NY: Continuum, 2000), 79-81.

¹¹²Ibid.

conditions, adequate housing and the opportunity to express their faith and love for God.¹¹³

In *Saint Francis: A Model for Human Liberation*, Boff explained how poverty dehumanized both the rich and the poor. First, he stated, poverty dehumanized the poor as people's needs were not met and families and individuals were destroyed. Conditions of poverty also deprived the poor people of the ability to expand their education, vocation and capacities, as they were mistreated and subjected to inhuman working conditions. The land owners and ruling classes dehumanized the poor, so they were considered non-persons, outcasts and burdens on society.¹¹⁴

Boff, like the Bible, says that God does not side with the mighty, but sides with those who have been violated in their dignity and treated unjustly. God's principal activity is the defense of the rights of the powerless, the persecuted and the poor. "He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight." (Psalm 72:14 NIV).¹¹⁵

The Third General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate was held on January 28, 1979, in Puebla, Mexico. At this third historical conference, the Catholic bishops continued discussions on improving the welfare of the "preferential option for the poor." Puebla described the poor as those who were oppressed, exploited, and hungry, and those who did not have access to health care, proper housing, education, and decent

¹¹³Leonardo Boff, *Faith on the Edge: Religion and Marginalized Existence*, trans. Robert R. Barr, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 15-16.

¹¹⁴Boff, *Saint Francis*, 50.

¹¹⁵Leonardo Boff, *When Theology Listens to the Poor*, trans. Robert R. Barr, (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1988), 59-60.

working conditions. The poor struggled for the right to be recognized and respected as persons in society, and treated with justice and dignity.¹¹⁶

Gutierrez was inspired by Bartholomew de Las Casas, a Spanish Dominican friar, who defended the Native Indians in the West Indies and Hispaniola. Las Casas, in the sixteenth century, described how the Indians were destroyed and ravaged by the Spaniards, who were supposed to be Christians. The Indians were made to function as slave laborers, were oppressed, and went without food to the point that they looked like “painted corpses.”¹¹⁷

In *A Theology of Liberation*, Gutierrez speaks about the new presence, “the irruption of the poor,” meaning that the marginalized and dispossessed poor, who historically were not counted as human beings, were now slowly changing, as their voices were becoming “present.” These people who were “absent” from society, history and the church were now being heard.¹¹⁸

The ruling classes looked on the poor and oppressed people as being insignificant, powerless and voiceless, and stripped them of their identities as men, women and children. Gutierrez described the discrimination that the poor people had been subjected to as including lack of food, housing, health care, and education. This discrimination further included exploitation of workers, permanent unemployment, disrespect for their human dignity, and limitations placed on personal freedom of self-expression, politics

¹¹⁶Boff, *When Theology Listens to the Poor*, 59-60.

¹¹⁷Gustavo Gutierrez, *Las Casas: In Search of the Poor of Jesus Christ*, trans. Robert R. Barr (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993), 39.

¹¹⁸Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*, trans. and ed. Caridad Inda and John Eagleson, (1973; repr., Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), xx-xxv.

and religion. In the Medellin and Puebla conferences, this poverty was referred to as institutionalized violence, terrorism and repression.¹¹⁹

Gutierrez argued that the limitations and restrictions that had oppressed God's people should be opposed, and a new construction of a different social order for justice, peace, respect and dignity should be raised up. The church was to show its solidarity with the poor by joining their struggles for transformation, and for the achievement of God's destiny for their lives.¹²⁰

Connections Between This Project and the Two Theological Traditions

This project, "Breaking the Cycle of Incarceration: Stories of My Work as a Missionary to Children of Incarcerated Parents," targets children of incarcerated parents who are the invisible¹²¹ victims of crimes and injustices, and who are paying for their parents' mistakes. Some of the parents are uneducated, have substance abuse addictions, and are in a low income bracket. The children have gone without proper food and health care, and many suffer from the effects of malnutrition. Learning disabilities are common among these children, many of whom struggle with reading and math. Some of these children are grade levels behind their peers in academic ability.

Emotionally, these children are often, left without their parent(s), broken-hearted; their families and homes have been torn apart. The children may become homeless and hungry, living in cars, motels, tents, or in cramped conditions shared with multiple

¹¹⁹Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*, xx-xxv.

¹²⁰Ibid.

¹²¹Bouchet, 5.

families. They are the innocent victims, abandoned, abused, neglected and vulnerable to predators who exploit them. This project, “Breaking the Cycle of Incarceration: Stories of My Work as a Missionary to Children of Incarcerated Parents,” has evolved to provide emergency service referrals to meet the children’s immediate needs for safety, and to establish relationships between the children and caring adult missionaries to ensure their ongoing stability and well-being.

This project is dependent upon the gifts of the Holy Spirit, from the Pentecostal/charismatic tradition, to reach the children with the Gospel. Missionaries seek God to unveil their eyes so that they may see something that was hidden or unknown. The gift of divine revelation closes the gap, as missionaries connect to God, and pray according to His plan.¹²² God also leads missionaries to pray prophetically, see visions and dreams, and leads to the journaling of specific scriptures.

This missionary’s desire is to strategically pray spiritual warfare prayers to tear down the territorial spirits that have imprisoned these children, and command the spirits to let the children go, in Jesus’ name. Through these intercessory prayers, angels also fight in the heavenly realms on behalf of the children, and spiritual walls and gates of protection are built in the unseen realm, to surround the children and their families. As a missionary, I stand in prayer asking that the children may receive Christ as their Lord, that they may receive liberty and justice, and that their innocence would be restored.

In comparison with the perspective of liberation theology, the missionaries’ role in the project is comparable to the role played by the activist priests. This missionary

¹²²Stephen T. Davis, “Revelation and Inspiration,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology*, ed. Thomas P. Flint and Michael C. Rea, (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2009), 32.

stands in solidarity with the children, the way the priests stood in solidarity with the poor and oppressed. Like Gutierrez, who left his world to enter into the world of the poor, I have left my world to enter into the world of the children of incarcerated parents. As the activist priests have been the advocates, so have I been an advocate for the humanitarian and spiritual needs of these children.

My voice is the voice of the “voiceless”, making the “invisible” children who have been absent from society more visible, within my sphere of influence. The theologians stood with the “non-persons” who were dehumanized by their society, to encourage a new presence in the “irruption of the poor,”¹²³ and began to make their voices heard in society. The priests sought the poor and oppressed, to show them that they were sons and daughters of God, created in His image, and that they deserved justice and liberation. “Breaking of the Cycle of Incarceration: Stories of My Work as a Missionary to Children of Incarcerated Parents” is a project to inform more missionaries to bring the Gospel to the children, to help them receive Jesus as their Lord. These children need to know that God has a plan and purpose for their lives which includes justice, healing and restoration.

Liberation theologians have advocated that a new order of social structures be built so that the poor and oppressed can be liberated socially, politically, culturally, educationally, and spiritually. These theologians recognized oppression as sin, and they fought to conquer evil and replace it with new social conditions including proper education, adequate food, housing and health care, as well as better wages and respect for

¹²³Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, xx.

the humanity and dignity of the people.¹²⁴ Similarly, this missionary has been determined to build new spiritual, social, and educational structures on behalf of the children of incarcerated parents. Missionaries have fought the same evil of oppression to liberate people to build healthy families and homes, gain educationally, and to raise their expectations for the future.

Conclusion

The purpose of the project entitled, “Breaking the Cycle of Incarceration: Stories of My Work as a Missionary to Children of Incarcerated Parents,” is to provide qualitative insights for addressing the needs of these children, to help break the cycle of incarceration, and give them a second chance to be winners and champions. Through this project, the Holy Spirit has been manifesting His gifts in distinct ways, consistent with two theological traditions. The Holy Spirit has revealed how these two theological traditions, the Pentecostal/charismatic movement and Catholic liberation theology, can work together and in fact, have worked together, for twenty five years in my own life and work.

This project has been supported by, and has linked together, both of the above described theological traditions. Both modes of theology strive for the implementation of new social structures that affect people, nations, and the institutions of family, marriage, and education. According to both traditions, the new order of structures must encompass both the physical and the spiritual realms. Only God’s people, through the Holy Spirit, have the power and authority to fight the battle against evil and win. Based on this

¹²⁴Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, xx-xxv.

foundation, the work of this project will inform methods to continue to bring justice and liberation to the poor and oppressed.

Theoretical Integration and Research Design

For this proposal, intercession, and hearing the voice of God and receiving His strategy for integrating the foundation papers into the project design, have been key. The Biblical foundation and core issues relative to the proposed project are found in meaningful ways in Psalm 82:3-4, written by Asaph, and the Gospel of Luke 4:18-19. Authors Tiffany and Ringe in the book, *Biblical Interpretation: A Roadmap*, state both scriptures are based on God's principles of justice and concerns that the poor and oppressed be liberated.¹²⁵

In Psalm 82:3-4, God specifically charges His people to rescue the weak and needy, maintain their rights, and deliver them from oppression and wickedness. Wickedness is tied to injustice and corruption, and God overthrows evil by declaring judgment and restoring justice.¹²⁶

The judges and the rulers, who were the leaders at that time, were defrauding, mistreating and perverting justice, and committing evil against God's people. Asaph prayed and interceded, and God responded by sending His mighty power through the Lord Zebaoth, overthrowing evil and wickedness, delivering and liberating the poor, and

¹²⁵Frederick C. Tiffany and Sharon H. Ringe, *Biblical Interpretation: A Roadmap* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), 111.

¹²⁶Nicholas Thomas Wright, *Evil and the Justice of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 55.

restoring justice in the land.¹²⁷ These principles have been a driving force in my work with the children and caregivers.

Poor people are the highest priority for God and for Jesus. Jesus' mission was to preach the Gospel to the poor, proclaim freedom to the prisoners, bring recovery of sight to the blind, and release the oppressed. The poor included the orphans and the widows who did not have the strength or power to defend themselves against their oppressors. They were the voiceless in society; those who were oppressed by those who were stronger.

One of the objectives of this proposal is to empower the children, through the Gospel, to develop socially, spiritually and educationally. Robert Linthicum suggests several tactics as to how churches can reach their communities with the Gospel and transform their communities with the peace of God. Linthicum emphasizes that equipping the church members to build fruitful relationships and partnerships is a necessity.¹²⁸

George Dallas McKinney, of the Church of God in Christ, wrote in "Holiness in the City: In Holiness Manifesto" that Jesus wept over the decaying spiritual, social and other conditions that were prevalent in his day. McKinney explains that Christians in the church and faith based organizations have the power to resolve spiritual problems by speaking spiritual truth.

In our day, the church must obey the great commission and take the Gospel to the poor and needy, the fatherless, the growing prison population, and those involved in

¹²⁷Reinhard Feldmeier and Hermann, *God of the Living: A Biblical Theology*, trans. Mark E. Biddle (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2011), 149-151.

¹²⁸Robert C. Linthicum, *Building a People of Power: Equipping Churches to Transform Communities* (Colorado Springs, CO: Authentic Publishing, 2006), 149.

gangs and violence in our communities. McKinney says that Christians are to be the voice of God in their city, stand up and debate policymakers, and declare justice for the poor.¹²⁹ This proposal is to minister to children whose parents are incarcerated. These children need physical and spiritual attention and restoration, and protection from injustices.

Historical Foundations Core Issues

John Wesley began where Jesus began, among the poor. Through prayer and during the night watches, God gave Wesley strategies to take the gospel to the poor, heal the sick, strengthen the weak and deliver the oppressed from evil. He raised money to feed the hungry, and at Christmas, Wesley gave clothes to the needy. He took the Gospel to the spiritually poor, oppressed, and neglected, and met them in their communities. Through this work, Wesley developed a comprehensive ministry that met the practical and spiritual needs of many. As he went forward in this work, the Holy Spirit made open air meetings possible, and tens of thousands of spiritually poor people came to hear Wesley preach.

The day after an open air meeting, Wesley had a society raised up, so that the new believers would continue to be fed spiritually. These societies met the spiritual, physical, social, labor, and medical needs of the people through the development of health care dispensaries, credit unions, co-ops and educational institutions.

¹²⁹George Dallas McKinney, "Holiness in the City: In Holiness Manifesto," *A/G Enrichment Journal* (Spring 2011): 188-198.

Dean Blevins wrote that John Wesley cared for and supported the education of poor children through religious, moral and academic teachings. Wesley believed it was important that children be taught Christian character and discipline, including obedience to their parents, educators and God, and he created Christian and academic curriculums that were understood by children of all ages, from elementary through college levels. Wesley supplied education for the poor children in the colonies, the poorest of the poor, and was said to have given his full support to the poor colliers' children living in a nearby hamlet.¹³⁰

Wesley created many sermons, and gave them to the leaders of the communities and the Methodist ministers, so that they could preach and win over the lost. Through Wesley's preaching and teaching, the people were transformed into reformers and contributors, who made positive impacts in their societies. They were elevated to leaders around the issues of child labor reform and wage reform, and Wesley sowed the seeds for prison reform to improve the living conditions of prisoners. Wesley was an outstanding model for taking the Gospel to the poor, and he commanded the vital message to those who followed him to do the same.

Through this project, the Gospel is being taken to the children in their communities, where they live, play and go to school. God has provided the strategy to meet physical needs through free emergency referral services offered through outreach. Children and caregivers whose immediate needs are met are more willing to hear the Gospel from a friend. The Gospel is shared, and the children are invited to get "plugged

¹³⁰Dean G. Blevins, "To be a means of grace: a Wesleyan perspective on Christian practices and the lives of children," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 43, no. 1 (March 1, 2008), 47-67.

into” camping and mentoring programs. Camping offers children a sense of knowing and belonging to God; it is a time when they are taken out of stressful environments to have fun. At the same time, they learn right from wrong according to the Bible, and are encouraged to make wise day-by-day choices.¹³¹

Theological Foundations Core Issues

God moved through the Catholic liberation theologians, Gustavo Gutierrez, Leonardo Boff and Paulo Freire. The work of these theologians forms the theological foundation for my own model. These theologians believed in the God of the Exodus to liberate the poor and oppressed in Latin America. They were activists who defended the “preferential option for the poor”. Gutierrez explained the “preferential option for the poor” by using the parable of the Good Samaritan, and he made a concerted decision to leave his world and the road he was on, in order to enter the road and the world of the “others”. The “others” were those who were in poverty, who had been cut off from social groups and were considered unimportant.¹³²

These poor people were victims of poverty, affected by the unjust social structures and systems of their day. The people in positions of power did not recognize these impoverished people as human beings. The poor were made to feel subhuman; they did not have the power to defend themselves, were unable to break the cycle of poverty by themselves, did not have rights, were denied justice, and were mistreated and

¹³¹Lindsay Shepardson, “With Community Outreach Ministry: We can,” *The Valley News* (July 24, 2009), 11.

¹³²Daniel G. Groody, *Gustavo Gutierrez: Spiritual Writings* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011), 247.

oppressed. To those in power, the poor did not count as being humans. They did not have a voice, a vote, a say, or a presence. For these people, living in poverty consisted of being alive, but being dehumanized by the social structures and systems. God gave the liberation theologians the strategy to stand in solidarity with the poor and to create new social and educational structures that included systems to elevate the poor from being dehumanized.¹³³

Paulo Freire was a widely known author, educator, and proponent of adult literacy who, as a child, lived with his family in extreme poverty. Freire observed the families living in poverty, and while playing among these poor children, he discovered that the reason the children were illiterate was because they were hungry; they needed food to be able to think and concentrate. Based on his observations, Freire later developed a problem-posing educational method to teach illiterate adults to read and write. Freire treated these poor men and women as conscious human beings who were in the process of becoming a part of the social structures and systems. And after these peasants that he worked with learned how to read and write, a whole new world of possibilities opened up to them.¹³⁴

Mentoring is a way of connecting struggling children who have been victims of injustices with adult achievers who are willing to encourage these children to be victors in their communities.¹³⁵ More mentors are needed as caring adult role models to engage the children socially and educationally to improve their self-esteem. Many of the children

¹³³Ivan Petrella, *Latin American Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005), 1-3.

¹³⁴Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 79-81.

¹³⁵William Cosby and Alvin F. Poussaint, *Come on, People: On the Path from Victims to Victor* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 86.

involved in this effort represent the first generation in their families to graduate from high school, college, or military training, and many have gone on to employment and are earning an honest salary. They are the proof that when the community gets involved positive changes can be made.

Connections Between the Foundations and the Proposed Project

The proposed project is entitled, “Breaking the Cycle of Incarceration: Stories of My Work as a Missionary to Children of Incarcerated Parents.” This project is connected to the foundations outlined above, in that the children of incarcerated parents are the poor and oppressed victims of injustices. They are socially, spiritually, and educationally neglected, and have been left behind by their parents. These children need help, in the same manner as the poor and spiritually neglected people who are mentioned in the biblical, historical and theological foundations needed help.

Like Wesley did in his day, this project is taking the gospel to children in their communities, where they live, go to school and play. Furthermore, this project is comprehensive, as it is meeting the children’s needs through the ministry’s free emergency service referrals, outreach, camping and mentoring programs. Through the work encompassed by this project, children are also being prayed for, and they are being taught the Gospel in their communities.

The role of this project is comparable to the role of the activist theologians described above, who made a concerted decision to leave their world a better place. The role of this missionary is to enter into the world of the poor and the spiritually neglected, to relieve the children from their struggles of injustices and oppression, see judgment

declared against wickedness, justice restored, and to assist the children to be liberated and become winners and champions.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

This project emanates from a sociological action research methodology and is entitled “Breaking the Cycle of Incarceration: “Stories of My Work as a Missionary to Children of Incarcerated Parents. ” The writer’s context is serving Community Outreach Ministry in Riverside, California interviewing six families caught in the cycle of incarceration. I have served as an urban missionary for twenty five years reaching unbelievers, children of incarcerated parents and their families with the Gospel.

The purpose of this study was to apprehend, document, and analyze fifteen stories of both the researcher and those researched including the children of incarcerated parents, the parents, and the caregivers in eight weeks. These children faced multiple risk factors, difficulties, and without intervention may become the next generation of inmates.¹ An important component to breaking the cycle of incarceration was to dialogue² with the children, and families to tell and make meaning of their stories. The problem was no stories addressing the children’s needs by the children existed in the literature.

The stories served as a research tool to provide useful data or qualitative insights to suggest interventions for these children. The measurements were the themes, patterns and concepts that emerged from the stories would provide insights to inform treatments.

¹Emily Sanders and Rachel Dunifon, “Children of Incarcerated Parents,” *Cornell University, College of Human Ecology, Cornell Cooperative Extension*, (2011): 1-8.

²Donna Hardina, “Narrative and Case Study Representing Diverse Viewpoints,” powerpoint presentation, accessed June 30, 2014, zimmer.csufresno.edu/~donna/Narrative%20and%20Case%20Study.ppt.

In this study a combination of emerging themes from the stories and three pre-determined measurements were utilized: social, spiritual and educational. These pre-set measurements have been confirmed as being crucial to the survival of children in this family dynamic:

- Socially Lindsay Hartford has served as a mentor with this organization for several years. In an interview with *Under the Sun Magazine*³ she explained being a mentor means spending time with her girls made them feel important. The girls loved going to Hartford's house to play in the pool and hanging out together. Hartford said the greatest thing about volunteering with Community Outreach Ministry has been hands on time with the girls. Hartford saw that the children were not getting the proper care they needed and she was there to help them through their struggles. As a mentor, she impressed upon her girls the importance of making wise choices and brought out the best in them.
- Spiritually these children needed a hand up to learn right from wrong and values clarification according to God's standards. They needed to know God loved them and that they belonged to Him. They needed to know their lives were significant. Their spirits needed to be elevated and their lives enriched with purpose, vision, and destiny.
- Educationally these children may have fallen grade levels behind in school and needed intervention to overcome obstacles and finish school. A mentee's mother asked this ministry to mentor her son as he was in the

³Lindsay Hartford, "Help with Healing, Community Outreach Ministry, Breaking the Cycle of Crimes Against at Risk Kids," *Under the Sun Magazine*, (October 2008), 38.

eighth grade, could not read and was struggling emotionally. Through this ministry's mentoring program, my husband mentored the mentee and he learned to read. He also became the mascot for his senior high football team and was the first generation to graduate high school and first generation in his family to become a Christian. After High School graduation, this mentee went into the United States Navy where he served as a military police stationed in an Island in Greece.⁴

Percy Pitzer a prison warden for thirty years with the Bureau of Prisons, who retired in 2012, started Creative Corrections Education Foundation in Texas to help students of incarcerated parents. He has stated that citizens of this nation needed to be proactive and take corrective action to minimize the number of children of inmates who are in jeopardy of being incarcerated. Pitzer advocates for children of inmates by supporting their education. The Creative Corrections Education Foundation provides college scholarships for the children of inmates to avoid following in their parents' footprints.⁵ He notes that helping them now will prevent having to pay the higher costs for their incarceration in the future.⁶ As Frederick Douglas affirmed, "It is easier to build stronger children than to fix broken men."⁷

⁴Chase Chamberlain, "A Success Story," *The Valley News* 24, no. 15 (June 17, 2011).

⁵Percy Pitzer, "Federal Overincarceration and Its Impact on Correctional Practices: A Warden's Perspective," *Criminal Justice* 28, no. 1 (Spring 2013).

⁶Ibid.

⁷Gary Crow, "Broken Men," *Home and Family*, October 4, 2007.

The Project

The methodology I used was a qualitative research approach narrative inquiry case study framework. The three data collection tools consisted of interviews, field notes and archival document analysis. Before interviewing the incarcerated parents, the children and caregivers, a voluntary informed consent form⁸ (see appendix A) was signed authorizing me to tape record their stories and every participant filled out a population by individual form⁹ (see appendix B). Through the population by individual form the co-researchers demographics have contributed to the credibility of a richer and thicker description in the participants case studies. The co-researchers identities and locations have remained anonymous, confidential, and protected. The forms in the appendices have intentionally been left blank.

Over the eight week timeline November 2013 to December 2013 six families caught in the cycle of incarceration were interviewed to discover their struggles. These families served as co-researchers in this study with me as the key researcher. The children and families identified to partake in this project have been involved through this ministry's annual Christmas party, outreach, camping, and mentoring programs. The caregivers were the gatekeepers and they set up the interviews with the children who were between the ages of nineteen to twenty-two. The parents of these children have been connected to the California Adult Criminal Justice System through, incarceration, parole or probation. I only engaged parents who were physically out of incarceration and back home with their families. At the interview sites I took field notes as the participant

⁸Sharon L. Price, "Mothers Incarcerated, Children in Crises: Private Troubles and Public Issues," (EdD diss., University of St. Thomas, 2011), 234-235.

⁹Ibid., 54.

observer and added a richer and thicker description to the narratives. I also recruited four faithful volunteer staff members to serve as my context associates to perform archival analysis on paper clippings, newsletters and videos on a universal serial bus (USB).

Data Analysis

To better organize and prepare the data for analysis, I hired an independent court stenographer reporter, licensed by the State of California to transcribe the audio-taped recording of the interviews into a manuscript form (see Stenographer Letter of Agreement appendix C). The manuscripts enabled me to read, review and understand the data for trustworthiness. Once I had an understanding of the narratives I was able to code the data which was generated from the themes that had been extrapolated from the participant stories. The coding process allowed me to generate a description of the categories and patterns for analysis. The findings identified common themes that have emerged from coding across all participants. These findings have been displayed in the participant narratives in Chapter five. The interventions that have emerged from the data (stories) are in the model (see appendix D). Visual tables for the incarcerated parents, the children and the caregivers have been documented in matrixes charts (see appendices E-K) and resource lists (see appendices L-N). After the narratives were written I did a purposeful sample of member checking with the incarcerated parents and the caregivers. All three participant sources, the incarcerated parents, the children and the caregivers have contributed to triangulation along with the three data collection methods: interviews, field notes and archival analysis.

Summary of the Model Implementation

This model has provided effective interventions, programs and resource lists that were previously lacking in the children's lives and in the literature. Not knowing their stories inhibited treatments to prevent incarceration. This model can be modified by missionaries across the country to expand the reach to this population giving the children opportunities to excel socially, spiritually and educationally.

As I reflected on my story as a missionary and using my personal work as a research tool, I was reminded of Gustavo Gutierrez, founder of Liberation Theology and the "preferential option for the poor." Gutierrez used his personal life and pastoral experience as a research tool.¹⁰ In Gutierrez' book *The Truth Shall Make You Free: Confrontations*. I recall how Gutierrez was asked during his doctoral defense, "What set of tools is to be used?"¹¹ Gutierrez answered "my personal and pastoral experience is my tools."¹² I agree with Gutierrez and it was an "aha moment" for me as my personal life and missionary pastor experience have been my set of tools. I identify with Gutierrez's solidarity with the poor and oppressed in Latin America and their need for justice and liberation. Just as Gutierrez stood with the poor and oppressed victims of injustices, so am I advocating for these children of incarcerated parents to be liberated and restored to justice.

Jean McNiff and Jack Whitehead recommended writing down the big research question and keeping it in front of the researchers as they read through every piece of

¹⁰Gustavo Gutierrez, *The Truth Shall Make You Free: Confrontations*, trans. and ed. by Matthew J. O'Connell and William E. Jerman, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990), 23.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

data.¹³ The big research question for this project was: How can I help break the cycle of incarceration in children of incarcerated parents?¹⁴ Through the new knowledge gained by my research and the creation of my model I am able to turn the big question into a statement at the end of my project and say, “I have helped to break the cycle of incarceration in children of incarcerated parents...”¹⁵

List of Personal and Program Requirements

As the key instrument in this study, I have created an original model that was useful and replicable to benefit children of incarcerated parents everywhere. Through my self-directed learning and critical reflection, transformative leadership has evolved which has enhanced my professional ministry development. As a minister of the gospel, I was seeking to use transformative leadership to become a more effective church leader and advocate for the children of incarcerated parents. The reality of not knowing the stories of these children of incarcerated parents inhibited resolution and liberation. I am compelled to continue to advocate for this population as Wilson Goode has said in his famous Riverbed speech “until all children of prisoners have left their wilderness experience and have crossed into their Promised Land.”¹⁶

This project also gave the participants an opportunity to tell, reflect on, and make meaning of their stories. Hopefully, the retelling of their stories contributed to their

¹³Jean McNiff and Jack Whitehead, *You and Your Research Project*, 3rd ed. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2010), 124-125.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 125.

¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶Thomas Smith, “The Least of These: Amachi and the Children of Prisoners,” *Public Private/Ventures*, July 31, 2012.

growth and resilience as it has for me. The analysis of their stories and my story has been combined into a single narrative report per family. This report has provided the qualitative insights to recommend interventions in the model. These interventions have focused on the children's social, spiritual, and educational wellbeing in order to help reduce risk factors, difficulties, and breaking the cycle of incarceration. The original knowledge gained from this project continues to be published through articles, newsletters and books giving these children a voice through their stories.

Significance of This Study

This study adds to the scholarly research and literature in the field to raise the level of visibility of the untold stories by this population. Dialogue helped the children to make meaning of their stories enabling understanding, growth and healing. The problem of not know their stories inhibited effective intervention and liberation. Through this study a model has been created and may be adapted and replicated everywhere by other practitioners. As the themes emerged from the stories, they provided qualitative insights to recommend interventions. I am compelled to be a voice and speak up for these children to help them socially, spiritually and educationally. These children needed intervention, liberation and justice restored through resolution.

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE

The purpose of this study was to collect, document, and analyze multiple stories of both the researcher and those who were researched, including the children of incarcerated parents, the parents, and the caregivers of the children. The stories that were gathered provided qualitative insights that may be utilized to develop a model for interventions and programs that will help children socially, spiritually and educationally, in an effort to break the cycle of incarceration. Information gleaned from the interviews of fifteen co-researchers, from six families, was included to highlight the participants' needs, perspectives and understandings.

The problem addressed through this project was that children of incarcerated parents face multiple risk factors and difficulties, and without intervention may become the next generation of inmates. An important component of this effort to break the cycle of incarceration was to dialogue with the children and families, and to tell their stories and make meaning of the experiences. Previously, a lack of information about their stories inhibited effective treatment and intervention. The current literature did not address the children's needs, or capture their voices and stories, and did not reflect models developed from their perspective.

The hypothesis was that documenting and analyzing the life stories as a research tool would provide useful data or qualitative insights to suggest interventions for these

children. The measurements were the themes, patterns and concepts that emerged from the stories and provided the insights to inform the development of treatments.

The findings tested that the qualitative insights from the lived stories of the children developed the model program for effective interventions to break the cycle of incarceration (Appendix D). The themes and measurements that emerged from the stories and became evident at the end of the project was the information needed to develop a model for new program interventions to break the cycle of incarceration (Appendices E-K). Resource lists were compiled for the incarcerated parents, the children, and the caregivers caught in the cycle of incarceration in Riverside, California (Appendices L-N).

My basic premises and assumptions were confirmed; there were no voices, stories or models addressing the children's needs from their perspectives in the literature. It was imperative that I listen to the stories, through the interviews, to hear what the co-researchers said they needed. Through the stories, a model emerged to prove the hypothesis and form the qualitative insights that may be used as the basis for interventions. The findings tested that the themes extrapolated from the stories were the measurements required to develop an effective intervention program.

Steps that will move this project forward include writing a book and adding this model to the literature. This model will be shared with concerned organizations, policy makers, funding sources, and legislators to advocate on behalf of families affected by incarceration. This project is replicable by others who allow the children and families to tell their stories, and doing so will result in the development of effective interventions to break the cycle of incarceration in communities across the nation.

Co-Researcher Demographics

Story One Family One

- A. Incarcerated Mother, African American, age 36, Christian, 12th grade, Divorced
- B. Caregiver-Grandmother, Black, age 60, Christian, B.A., Married
- C. Son, African American, age 19, Christian, Technical School 13th grade, Single

Story Two Family Two

- A. Parent is incarcerated could not access his story
- B. Caregivers Mother/Grandparents, Hispanic, age 40, Christian, GED/AA, Divorced
- C. Son, Native American, age 22, Christian, GED/AA, Single

Story Three Family Three

- A. Incarcerated Father, Hispanic, age 40, No Religion, GED, Married
- B. Caregiver-Mother/Grandfather, Caucasian, age 35, Christian, 12th grade, Married
- C. Son, Hispanic, age 19, Christian, graduated High School, in College, Single

Story Four Family Four

- A. Parent is incarcerated could not access his story
- B. Caregiver is Mother, Hispanic, age 39, Catholic, One year college, Divorced
- C. Daughter, Hispanic, age 19, Catholic, working on GED, Single

Story Five Family Five

- A. Parent is incarcerated could not access his story
- B. Caregiver-Great Aunt, Black, age 69, Christian, GED/College, Married
- C. Son, Black, age 19, Christian, College Student, Single

Story Six Family Six

- A. Parent is incarcerated could not access his story
- B. Caregiver-Grandparents, Hispanic, age 56, Christian, 10th grade, Married
- C. Granddaughter, Hispanic, age 19, Christian, Two years College, Single

Story One—Family One—Chapter One—What Started the Parents on the Road to Incarceration? Incarcerated Mother, Age 36, African American—Poor Choices

I started hanging around with the wrong crowd...and I was introduced to drugs.

At sixteen years of age, while in high school, I became pregnant by my boyfriend who was nineteen years of age. Our son was born when I was seventeen. My boyfriend graduated from high school and I graduated one year ahead of schedule from

continuation school for pregnant girls. We were married and moved in together, but our marriage only lasted about a year. We were both very young and he wanted to have fun with the guys and I was the mom at home taking care of our baby. Our marriage fell apart.

At this time, I had been working in sales and I started hanging around with the wrong crowd, and they introduced me to crystal meth. I was about twenty years of age when I was hanging out with this group of friends, partying, using drugs, and taking trips. I kind of left my son with his dad and his dad's mom for a little while to live my own life. I did not want to be a mom, and I knew I could walk away and never come home because my son was being taken care of by his dad and grandma. I was out there just using drugs and I could come back at any time. My son was not happy that I was not home and that I was not the mom I was supposed to be. My husband at this time really wanted to settle down, but now I was on another page. I was twenty-one, and now I felt like it was my time to party. This lasted until my son was four years of age.

Then I stopped hanging out with those friends, and I realized I needed to get my life together and take care of my son. I found a better job in finance, but was only earning \$7.00 or \$8.00 per hour. I found an apartment for my son and I, and we shared a bedroom. Financially, I was not receiving any child support from my ex-husband in retaliation for leaving him, and my mom helped me to make ends meet. I saw my friends who were doing great things with their lives, in college, having fun, buying new cars and new houses. I was a single mom, struggling, and I wondered where my life had taken the wrong turn; I wanted so much more out of life.

I was twenty-two when I met my second husband, who was in the military. We were married and bought a house when I was twenty-three, and my daughter was born that same year. After our daughter was born, I gained a lot of weight and I found out that my husband was cheating, and our marriage went downhill. I fell into depression and anxiety, and I turned back to drugs in order to lose weight, and that is when my life spiraled downhill. Previous to this, I had been active in church and I felt blessed, and I loved my pastor and the people at church. My pastor, who was very overweight, had a heart attack and died. The church was declining and in chaos, and there was no one who was able to hold onto the church. This was about the time I started using drugs again and I took myself completely out of the church.

Drug Use

I went back to drugs and partying with a group of people and got into the fast life. I knew that crystal meth was a way to lose weight, and I started using again. As I got deeper into drugs, my usage got worse and worse and I needed more money, so I committed white-collar crime at work. My employer suspected me, the police were notified, and the police waited for me one day until I came home. The police arrested me and my husband in front of my children, and took us into custody. My mom came and picked up my children and raised them for the five years that I was incarcerated. After I confessed to the crime, my husband was released and put on probation. After I was released from incarceration, my husband and I tried to make a go of our marriage for a year, but we had just grown apart, and it did not work out. We were divorced after being married for twelve years.

Analysis: Generational Deficits and Benefits

As I began to analyze this story, it became evident that poor choices and use of drugs were part of the generational deficits that took place in an environment of poor choices and substance abuse. The co-researchers' dad was an alcoholic who had committed domestic violence against her mom and had been arrested several times. Her father also was retired from the military, and was working in aerospace manufacturing when her parents divorced. She was either four or five years of age when this happened and she was devastated. She did not understand, but she did remember her parents fighting, the police coming to the house, and her and her mother being escorted out by authorities. That was the last time she saw her father. Her mother pursued her father for child support, but he skipped town, leaving a company where he had worked for two decades. Her father had been previously divorced with two older daughters who were ten or more years older than her. Her father's mother had also been divorced, and on her mother's side, her grandmother had been divorced as well.

While in her early twenties, she learned from her older half sisters that her father had committed suicide. He had been working as a truck driver and had four or five violations for driving while under the influence of alcohol. The sisters speculated that their father may have been motivated to kill himself before getting another ticket, as another ticket most likely could mean losing his job as a truck driver.

The co-researcher's mother had a brother who was addicted to crack cocaine. He had been warned by his doctor that he had a bad heart, and that if he did not stop using drugs, his heart would give out. He continued using drugs and his heart gave out as the doctor predicted.

Her parent's marriage ended in divorce because of domestic violence and alcoholism. She also had been divorced twice; the first time was when her son was four years old and the second time was after her daughter was born. Her parents' marriage ended when she was four, and her marriage ended when her son was four. Her father skipped town and did not pay her mother child support, and she did not like it. Her ex-husband also did not pay her child support, however, she said it made her a stronger person. Her second husband was unfaithful to her, as her dad was to her mother. Her mother was there for her, interceding on behalf of her daughter and helping her through life's struggles.

Generational benefits included the fact that her mother was a woman of faith and a pillar in the church. The co-researcher's grandparents were in church all of their married lives, and have celebrated their sixtieth wedding anniversary. Her mother raised her in the church from the time she was a baby and throughout her childhood, and she attended until she became of the age to make her own choices. When she was eight years old, her mother re-married, and she said that she liked having her step-father in her life. The grandparents raised her children while she was incarcerated for five years. While incarcerated, she went back to church and has stayed committed to God. Today, she and her children, mom, step-father and grandparents constitute four generations of believers serving God.

Chapter Two—What Happened to the Children as a Result of the Parent Being Incarcerated?—Male Child, Age 19, African American—Absentee Parents

It was very shaking for me and my little sister. It was very clear that mom did something wrong when the police were there at our house, but I did not know why they took mom away. I was sent to live with my grandparents and it was hard living with them because they did not understand me and they had too many rules. At my grandparents, I had to stay in a lot and could not be out after dark. They would tell me to pull up my pants, wear nicer clothes, not wear dirty shoes, and not go out of the house looking messy. I was able to do more things living with mom without getting into trouble and I was always missing my mom. Over the phone, I would try and tell mom what was wrong here at the house, but she encouraged me to humble myself, and said she would get out one day. Getting to visit mom in prison, face to face after six months, on a Saturday and Sunday, was definitely big.

I started to go to youth group at church and I think connecting with kids who were the same age as me helped me to learn there were other kids with the same troubles, or worse. My youth pastor was a really crazy guy and he loved baggy pants, big shirts, and wearing flat caps. If you listened to him speak, you would hear God in him. No matter what, he always encouraged me and planted a seed in my heart. This definitely made me connect with him, and made me want to go to his church.

Shame

“I needed to connect with other kids whose parents were incarcerated to know that it was not just me.” Being around kids my own age who have gone through hard times like me, and seeing that they made it through, showed me that I could make it

through, too. Hearing the stories of other youth my age showed me that I was not the only one in this situation. I think having the right people around my age opened my eyes and gave me a better understanding that I was not alone.

Analysis: Conflict

Children of absentee parents endure conflict that is brought upon them by circumstances beyond their control. Children are the silent victims of their parents' crimes. They live with heartache, fear, embarrassment, anger, and insecurity over the absence of their parent(s). A family that is split endures pain, and members may be affected psychologically, with flashbacks and nightmares. In this story, the child said he was shaking when his parents were arrested. This was traumatic for him to endure and his family's instability caused him pain and uncertainty. He did not know what his mother had done wrong or when she was coming back.

Children in this predicament may feel shame or embarrassment from being raised by someone other than their own parent(s). Their friends may ask questions and want to know where their mother and/or father are, and why they are living with their grandparents. These questions can cause anxiety, withdrawal, and depression. Children whose parents are incarcerated do not want their secret to be exposed because they fear being stigmatized, judged, looked down upon, and teased. Thus, these children always have their guard up, dreading questions and gossip.

Mona's Story and the Gospel in Intervention

The Community Outreach Ministry annual Angel Tree Christmas party and camps demonstrate to the children that they are special to God and to us. Mona encourages the children to have fun and enjoy the activities. These events give the children an escape from troubles, and their secret is safe and no questions are asked. Children learn to sing Christian songs and hear Bible stories, and their spirits are lifted and they are inspired with hope for a brighter future.

Annual Angel Tree Christmas Party

Once this mother was transferred from jail to prison, she signed up her two children with Angel Tree. This was for her children to participate in the Christmas party and year round camp. The mother wanted her children to be around other children like themselves. Angel Tree contacted Community Outreach Ministry to adopt these two children. This family lived in the area where Community Outreach Ministry is headquartered. The caregiver was familiar with Mona because Community Outreach Ministry used the building where the caregiver and her grandchildren went to church.

I contacted the grandmother over the phone for a wish list for her grandchildren. She provided me the wish list and offered to call other caregivers for their children's wish lists. I welcomed her as a volunteer and hoped she and the other caregivers could talk and pray for one another. She became involved in this ministry because she had a heart for the youth. She also volunteered at the Christmas party in 2005 and experienced firsthand the acceptance and love that was poured out on the children. The children were welcomed as guests of honor and treated like royalty. We wanted the party to be the best

Christmas celebration of their lives. We valued the children and wanted them to know that they were greatly loved by God and us.

A delicious hot meal and Christmas cupcakes were served. We involved the children in arts and crafts, encouraged them to have fun dipping fruit and marshmallows into a chocolate fountain and decorated cookies with festive sprinkles. We invited children from local schools to play instruments, sing, and dance and engage the children in singing Christmas carols. Members of the Fire Department brought their fire truck, taught the children safety, and gave them a tour of their equipment. California Highway Patrol (CHP) officers brought toys and passed them out to all of the children. The local Sheriff and Deputies brought their squad car and let the children explore their vehicle equipment. These were creative ways for the children to get to know local law enforcement officers as 'good guys' and not as the 'bad guys' who took their parents away.

Sponsors provided gifts to Community Outreach Ministry for the children at the party. Volunteers have shared the vision with us of having gifts donated by local businesses as an investment in the future of our children and our community. We invited local doctors, fitness centers, beauty salons, women's clubs, and other businesses to invest in the children's lives. Sponsors beautifully wrapped and decorated every gift, which made opening the gifts even more exciting. The gifts were heartwarming, because the children believed the gifts were from their parents. The party has become well known in the community because it has been seen as an outreach for individuals and families to volunteer and make a difference in the lives of children.

The gospel was shared by Luke Gus, the red headed Santa ventriloquist, who told the Christmas Story in order to spread Christmas joy. Luke Gus invited all of the children to come and sit on the floor close to him, so that he could see the children's eyes sparkle as he told the story of Christ's birth. This joy reached beyond the children to their families, the sponsors and the volunteers. At the party, children were invited to sign up for camp, where they spend an entire week in the mountains having a life changing experience. The grandson signed-up and was elated at the opportunity to spend a week at camp with a group of kids his age. Camp has been a mountain top experience for him, and he has been back every year.

Camp

I call camp an "advance" because it moves the children forward with the Lord. At camp, the children discovered that they were loved, and the staff brought out the best in them. They discovered their gifts, talents, forgiveness for their parents, peace with the past and the means to enter into a new beginning in Christ.

At camp, the children truly related to each other because they were close in age and experiencing similar life situations. They each had experienced the pain and shame of having incarcerated parents. The children came together at camp, where they became dorm mates and team mates, and shared life with their counselors for a week straight. Together, they learned to build each other up. They learned to make moral choices through experiencing God's Word, and their minds were renewed through scripture memorization.

Their counselors were their friends, coaches, and role-models; godly people who encouraged the campers to stretch beyond their family circumstances. The counselors were there as friends to talk to, cry with, pray with, and have fun with. They supported the children to stretch themselves to improve their character, to be disciplined, and to make wise choices. Staff encouraged the children to say “no” to the wrong crowd, drugs, alcohol, dropping out of school, and sex before marriage, and to avoid the same mistakes their parents made.

Campers relationships with Jesus grew, and they learned to call on Him in prayer. Their spirit was strengthened through the Bible verses they had learned. These children were embraced in prayers for them to have a personal relationship with the Lord, and for their counselors to be their friends and mentors for years to come. It was vital that the children stayed connected to their mentors to have a friend beyond camp and throughout the year.

The children felt loved and experienced knowing that their lives were significant to God, the staff, counselors and mentors. When the week was over, the campers did not want their time together to end. For an entire week they had been playing, having fun, singing to Jesus, developing team skills, practicing sports, and building self-esteem. The campers looked forward to coming back to camp every year.

Chapter Three—What Happened to the Caregivers as a Result of the Incarceration? Grandmother Caregiver, Age 60, African American—Challenges for the Caregivers

For my husband and myself, I have to say it was extremely challenging. We were “empty nesters”, and had to make a choice to take the grandchildren or let them go into

the foster care system. We interceded immediately when my daughter and her husband were taken in by the authorities. It was challenging because we did not know what to do or what to say. We were confused and it made our situation even more difficult. There was not one person I could pick up the phone and call to give me support as a caregiver. So we kind of ran away with our grandchildren and did fun things with them at the river, but we had to come back and face reality.

The biggest difficulty was our own personal embarrassment, like we had failed as parents. We wanted to protect our grandchildren from feeling that same way. We enrolled our grandchildren in the same Christian school on the same day. We wanted them to be in a smaller oriented school surrounding, where they would not be ostracized or made fun of, but rather cared for and loved. We wanted them safe at school and this environment helped to keep the family as a whole. The conditions the children had been in before they came to live with us were not conducive to a stable family environment. So we had to establish rules, especially for my older grandson. He had to come home after school and study, he was not allowed to go into anybody's house, and we needed to know who his friends were.

Financial Hardships

Some of the programs for the children were costly; sportsmanship, tutoring, and mentoring. Finances were something that our family and families like ours needed because of the fact that grandparents may be on a fixed income. There were not any finances that came in from the parents, the county, the state, or the government. Then my daughter was sent to a facility that was a five-hour drive from home, which meant gas

money for traveling, spending the night in a lodge, and food expenses. There was the expense of phone calls, stamps, cards to write, and pictures to send in order to communicate and still be a part of each other's lives. I made sacrifices for her to be able to call collect to talk to her children. The calls made a difference because the children were able to talk to their mom about things that were happening in their lives. The calls kept the lines of communication open, as I could not take the children to visit their mom until she was in a permanent place. This was because of the guards, the fences, and the barbed wire, taking off your shoes, metal detectors, and visiting behind a glass screen.

One day, when I went to visit my daughter, it was a hardship standing there in line waiting for my turn to go in to visit. I asked a volunteer why she volunteered, and she said, because there are some inmates who do not get visits and it is by the grace of God that I am not in here. My eyes were opened up that maybe it was by the grace of God that I had not been incarcerated. There were things in my life that I had done, maybe not as critical or demeaning, but I was not holier-than-thou, I just was not caught. It was at this point in time that I could literally hold my head up and feel good about being there. I made up my mind that I would be there to support my daughter through thick and thin. So after she was permanently placed, then I took the children for a visit where they could hug and touch each other.

Social Challenges

I needed somebody to come and sit down with us and talk to us and say, you know, you are not the only one going through this, it is not your fault. We were thinking we had failed our daughter, our parents, ourselves, and our grandchildren. We were on

our own and did not have anybody to tell us what to do, and it was very difficult. We were not sure of the severity of the situation, whether it was going to be a short term or long term situation.

As the caregiver, I needed a support system, a case manager, a child advocate, a course guide, a tool kit, and resources. Resources were also needed for the children and for their incarcerated parent, something to help us deal with and understand what was going on with my grandchildren's feelings, but I had nothing. My grandson was feeling abandonment, guilt, shame, anger, insecurity, the fear of being exposed, and the embarrassment of saying that his mother was in prison. I wondered what families do in these situations to identify mental or behavioral issues, and deal with depression, and withdrawal. My grandchildren needed a support system for an eight year old and a three year old. My grandson was angry for being in the situation he was in, and he was angry for having his freedom taken away. Starting from day one, my daughter, during incarceration, needed rehabilitation classes, parenting classes, computer classes, training in a trade, and skills to get a job for when she came out, to prevent recidivism.

I could have used help to identify what to do with feelings produced by trauma. I needed access to medical and health resources, educational tutoring and mentoring resources, and financial support to raise the children. There were no paychecks that came in to support my grandchildren while my daughter was incarcerated. I needed resources to protect my grandchildren, keep them whole, protect their innocence, and to keep them safe and secure. What if this happened again? What if something happened to me? I needed financial resources for the children to have communication with their incarcerated parent, to keep the family whole, meaning for the family unit to be whole. Because of the

separation, there was a “hole,” a brokenness, a void, and emptiness. That void was very noticeable as it was front and center, and it was only something Jesus could fill.

My grandson, and children in his predicament, needed to have ways to boost their self-esteem, to share their experiences, and feel loved. A Big Brother or Big Sister to help them learn how to feel comfortable with themselves, and not be concerned about their secret. Mentors were needed to take the children for social outings and do activities with them to help build their confidence. Educational tutors close to their own age were needed to help build their skills. The children needed to have a monthly time together with others that they could relate to.

Spiritual Challenges

I would say it is really critical to get the children involved in social activities in church, for them to learn that God loves them even more than their parents do, and He is their foundation to fall back on. I am a big advocate for youth group and because of my grandchildren I felt the need to be involved. Church is life-saving because this is where they learned about God’s grace, mercy, love, and forgiveness. The children needed to forgive their incarcerated parents and have grace and mercy on their caregivers who seemed to be overly disciplining. Church provided a mechanism for the children to learn the spiritual aspect of God, to worship Him, and to learn scriptures. The children needed to know God has a plan to prosper them.

Camp gave my grandson an opportunity to get away where he could be comfortable around other people where he was not going to be judged or ostracized. Every year he looked forward to camp to just being around other kids who had been

exposed to some of the same situations. At camp my grandson was not embarrassed and he was able to open up and have a wonderful time. I would say, even though he went to a Christian school, his real introduction to and relationship with God was formed at his initial visit to camp in 2006. Camp was just so important for him to empty all of his heartache out around people that could relate to him. My granddaughter was too young to be exposed, and only knew that mom was not here.

My daughter signed up her children with Angel Tree, and our family was connected immediately to Christmas gifts. My grandchildren honestly felt in their heart like the presents were coming from their mom. It was just exciting for the children to know that mom was still extremely attached to them, and wanted them to have a wonderful Christmas. So the presents in themselves made a huge impact on my grandchildren.

Educational Challenges

For those children who were fortunate enough to stay in school, I think it would be great to have after-school programs set up specifically for mentoring and tutoring. Some of the children may feel embarrassed or ostracized, but I think it is important to identify those children who need the help in order for them to do better. I had limited homework skills and my grandchildren needed to have a tutor to help them.

I found out that sports were very educational, but expensive for families who were in a predicament like mine and more than likely participating in sports was not affordable. So the government, or somebody, needs to provide assistance for these children to be motivated and not to feel like losers. Intervention must be implemented to

prevent them from following their parents into incarceration. These children needed sports programs where they did not feel like the whole world was looking down on them.

Also, bringing the caregivers to share together with other caregivers, at least once a month, about what is working for them, would be helpful. Definitely, the children needed to be brought together with other children who were in the same circumstances monthly so that they could feel that their story could be told.

Mona's Story and the Gospel in Liberation

It was the summer of 2006 when this caregiver's grandson went to camp with Community Outreach Ministry. At camp, he experienced an understanding of Jesus Christ and dedicated his life to the Lord. Jesus came in and filled the hole that he had in his heart. It was life changing and liberating. His salvation experience was distinctly linked to his camping experience. Camping made the difference between spiritual life and death in breaking the cycle of incarceration. If more children could have the opportunity to experience church camp, they too could be spared destructive behaviors and making the same mistakes their parents made.

Over the seven plus years of being at camp every year, this camper has developed a successful music ministry, singing and playing guitar. Children have been drawn to him through his gift of leading worship. He has subsequently volunteered at winter retreat and kid's summer camp. In 2012, when he returned home from camp, he started a Bible study group in his church for children, ages six to eighteen. Since then, the group has grown to more than twenty youth. Through this ministry, he mentors young people with God's Word, in order to bring wholeness to their lives.

As a volunteer for Community Outreach Ministry, he has been reaching out to at-risk kids, getting them involved in sports and recreational activities. He has graduated from high school and vocational school. He has a skilled trade that he has put to use, working for an international corporation. In recognition of his support of Community Outreach Ministry, he has been awarded a certificate by the State of California District Senator for his humanitarian efforts toward helping children of incarcerated parents to break the cycle.

I know that at camp, God gave him the answer to give when asked, “Where is your mom?” He was to reply, “She was up north”. He was shielded and protected through these words, and liberated from being exposed. This response was sufficient and no further questions were asked. Even his grandmother was amazed by the words that God had given to her grandson to say.

After the incarcerated mother came out of incarceration, she volunteered with Community Outreach Ministry, and became my Angel Tree coordinator for a few years. She learned how to work alongside me as a personal assistant, and connected with caregivers, parents, and Prison Fellowship’s Angel Tree ministry and the community. She has a great personality, a smile that lights up a room, and a great head on her shoulders. My ministry has invested in obtaining a business license for her and has utilized her skills as a contract laborer. Today, she has a full time, paid position working with people in rehabilitation from substance abuse, and continues to volunteer for me. She also serves as a youth leader in her church and is making a positive contribution for the Kingdom of God.

The Grandmother has continued to volunteer with my Christmas and camp programs, and also supports the Veterans Day parade, honoring all those who have served. This caregiver and I have seen God work miracles in her daughter and grandchildren. Today, this grandmother has the joy of experiencing God's steadfast promises of having her daughter and grandchildren serving God.

Story Two Family Two—Chapter Two—What Happened to the Children as a Result of the Parent Being Incarcerated?—Male Child, Age 22, Native American Absentee Parents

I lived in fear that dad would come back and I was asked threatening questions like, "Where is your dad now?" It was embarrassing, and I felt abandoned. I wondered, what am I supposed to do? Do I wear a smile on my face and adapt to a guy I never knew? Do I even call him dad? What am I supposed to call him? What if I ran into him at the store? There was no such thing as just letting it go because it was always in the back of my head. Who was that guy that was supposed to be here for me? It did not leave my mind because I was always trying to put the pieces of the puzzle together.

Life was not just a struggle for me, but also for my other parent because she had to do everything on her own as a single parent, and our family situation was incomplete. I wanted to create an environment where everyone was happy, but there was no such thing as perfect. I thought people with two parents had it better than I did with one parent, and I just did what I was told to do. I was trapped, so I listened, obeyed and survived. I just envisioned myself riding a bike when my legs grew longer or driving a car when I became of age. At the end of the day, if somebody just threw me a football it would have

been the happiest thing on earth. So that was what got me through, just going outside and hanging out with friends around the neighborhood.

As a child, I had put myself in the future and tried to imagine myself in a different life. I was kind of numb the entire way through my childhood and high school experiences. The highest grade I got through in high school was pre-algebra and that was when high school ended. I dropped out of school, taught myself how to do math, and passed the General Education Development (GED) equivalency test. The teachers did not teach me in high school, and that goes for many of the other students. I just did not get algebra in school, nor did I get it anywhere else, until I taught myself. The teachers needed to know how to properly teach children who were in survival instinct mode, not that I was starving, but it was the talk of money and survival.

As a kid, I struggled with threatening questions like, "So where is your dad now?" Just challenging questions, just questions that a dick would say and it was awful. These questions tear a child apart and put a child in a jail cell before they are old enough to go to jail. It was embarrassing, because they would take it to the next level and started asking why my mom did not make it work. These questions put a child in an adult state when they are just children. That is why I said, as a child I was always trying to figure things out, and trying to put the pieces together. It was judgment, and it was not just the teachers, but it was from society, and it came from all different directions. I never did know how to answer the question, where is your dad now, without feeling like I was under a gun. I felt abandoned.

I discovered my purpose in life when I found out that I belonged to God and belonged in His kingdom. God's spirit leaped inside of me and I was accepted into the

kingdom of God. It was not about what He could give to me, because I was not a taker, but a contributor, and I wanted to give to God. That is what turned me on, because children in my state were not takers, but givers. Now that I am connected to God, I am a contributor not just to my family, but into the Kingdom of God. I find pleasure in serving in media, and in children's ministry in church, and this is just the beginning. All I had to do was get involved with God, and he gave me purpose in life. Perhaps another child with two parents, a dog, and two cars in the driveway might be asking, "What can God give to me?"

Shame

I took on the responsibility of being a father and protector to my younger sibling. I had stress on my shoulders and it was hard to function as a kid and in school. A lot more pressure was put on my back as a child, more than a regular child in a normal family environment. I was trying to figure out what was best for the other child in my family. These stresses on my back made it hard for me to be a kid. My mind was elsewhere at times, trying to figure out what was going on at the house because there was drama at times about money, relationships between relatives, and why things were not working out.

As a child, I was thinking about things that a child should not have to think about, like how much money was in the bank, why we could not eat this amount of food, and why we do not talk to certain people; I felt limited. It was not that my parent put the responsibility upon me, but it was the way I adapted to the situation. It was like watching a movie in Africa, where you see the child raising the children because the mother has

passed away. I just took on that responsibility, and I think my family connected a little deeper because we could not survive without each other. I learned to live with what I have, and that was life's greatest lesson. I cannot recall ever learning anything more important in school or life itself than living in an environment together with my family and it being a team effort.

I did not have a normal education, and the teachers did not give me the same education they gave to the other students. It was hard for me as a kid in public school, because I could not read or do algebra. I did not learn how to read until my mother took me out of school for a couple of months and taught me how to read using "Hooked on Phonics". While in school, the teachers would sit me outside the class during lectures, and it grew to the point that they did not teach me or want me in the class. My mind was elsewhere at times, and I was trying to figure out what was going on at the house and why things were not panning out for me in school.

We had lived in a neighborhood where we were the same race, and I felt like I fit in there. Then we moved into a white neighborhood, and the students in school led a different lifestyle than mine. They were all into the same things, the same clothes, same toys and stuff like that. When I arrived at school, my clothes were a bit big. They were more baggy and a little torn apart. This was because my clothes came from a trash bag left on my doorstep, as we could not afford others. My clothes stood out and I was pushed into an area of school that had borders. If I crossed the boundaries at the border with the other kids, I stood out.

This was why it was difficult to be a kid. I was forced into this lifestyle and it was full of judgment, the kind of lifestyle that leads a person to alcohol and drugs. It was not

something I chose, it was just what life had put on me and I adapted to the surroundings for the benefit of survival. For me, it was just like rolling over, and it was the worst time ever because so much was going on around me. I wanted to talk about the things I heard at school and the things I heard at the house, but I was told from the beginning to keep quiet and keep private or get hit. I felt like a muzzle was placed over my mouth and this forces the dog into a corner and then you do not know where to go. So, life was torture and I accepted defeat.

Analysis: Conflict

Children of absentee parents have experienced shame and were victims of conflict, which caused them to internalize stress and social pressure. He took on the responsibility of being a father figure to his younger sibling. This has also happened to other children who have incarcerated parents. They either assume the position of parent or are forced into it, depending on their circumstances. He stated it was not as though his parent put the responsibility on him; it was how he adapted. Although he lived with his mother and grandparents, he did not want his grandfather involved in anything specific to what he considered to be father functions. He felt that he had to be strong and not depend on anyone else because his father figure was gone.

School was a struggle, as his mind was not on his school work, but on the drama that was occurring in his home. He was concerned about money, food, and relationships between infringing relatives. He did not learn to read or do math in school, and his teachers did not address his needs. It was hard for him to function in school and he lacked self-confidence.

At school, he felt self-conscious, insecure and out of place. He was Native American in a student population that was predominately Anglo. His clothes were used and donated and it made him feel confined by economic and social boundaries. He experienced feelings of being judged, limited and defeated and did not want anyone asking him questions about his absent father. He was unable to talk to anyone about what was happening at school or at home, and he described this as torture.

He feared that his father would come back, and he was haunted by how he was supposed to act if that happened. He said he was always trying to figure things out, like putting the pieces of a puzzle together. There were so many unknowns in his life and these uncertainties were robbing him of his peace of mind. These thoughts were relentless and they were with him all of the time. Thus, he described his feelings growing up as being numb.

He dealt with these conflicts in various ways. Thinking about the future helped him because it gave him something to look forward to. He envisioned himself riding a bicycle when his legs grew. He looked forward to being able to drive a car. He described football as the happiest thing on earth and he had friends who played football with him. He also found meaning and purpose in knowing and serving God. These positive thoughts and experiences helped him through the tough times.

Mona's Story and the Gospel in Intervention

Mona and her husband have known him for sixteen years, since he was six years old. Our relationship started at an Assembly of God church, where we met him, his mother, and his younger sibling. At this church, Mona served as the mission pastor until

she and her husband became co-founders of Community Outreach Ministry. As mission pastor, Mona taught Intercession and Spiritual Warfare on Sundays, and Evangelism on Wednesdays. Mona took a team out on Wednesday evenings to low income neighborhoods to meet people's needs. She asked the apartment managers from the various communities for permission to use their property, and with their approval invited tenants to outreach. The outreach team brought blankets and tarps, and used puppets to draw children and families. We played music, sang and used puppets to tell Bible stories in English and Spanish. Ice cream cones were served by the team, and we visited with the children and families, giving them tracts and pencils. They were invited to come back the following week for outreach. At seven years old, he started doing outreaches with his mother, and Mona and her husband, along with people from three other churches, taking food and clothing to fifty families in Rosarito, Mexico. This ministry has also made it possible for him to go to summer camp on a scholarship. Camp was a place for him to be set apart and to have fun and to learn Bible principles from God's word.

Chapter Three—What Happened to the Caregiver as a Result of the Incarceration? Mother Caregiver, Age 40, Mexican—Challenges for the Caregivers

I faced challenges because of my poor choices and being anti-social. My ex-husband was a career criminal and half of his life was spent in incarceration. He started out in Boys Town. Then he went into juvenile hall, then jail, and then proceeded on into incarceration. I was seventeen when I met him, and he was twenty-six years old, divorced, and had a son. He had only been out of prison for three months when we started dating. At this time in my life, I was anti-social and only dated guys who were in gangs. In the eleventh grade, I dropped out of school because I was pregnant. We were married

and I had two children in two years. I had married a violent man who was a heroin addict and I became a victim of domestic violence. In the two years we were married, I lived in four to five battered women's shelters with my two children. My ex-husband is now serving a lifetime sentence. His family and siblings also lived a life of violence, drug addiction, and incarceration.

When I was thirteen, I accepted Christ, but I did not go to church or serve God until I was nineteen. Prior to this, I did not serve God and I did not care about anything productive in society, just my own kind of life style and what felt normal to me. I hoped I could change my husband to serve God, but he continued to use drugs and was violent. The last time we really did live together, he said that he would go to church and I was kind of excited because I was pregnant. My husband had kept me up for three or four days without sleep because of his heroin addiction. We started to go to church and I do not remember what started it, but it was the only real time I ever fought back. We fought in the car and then drove home. When we got home he said, "I am not going to kill you, I am going to shoot you in your knees, then your hands, and then your wrists. I am going to sit here and watch you bleed to death." I was so tired from being up without sleep, I said, "Do it, I do not care." He went into the garage and I could see him looking in a box then he came back in and said, "Forget it, you are not worth it," and he left for the day. When he was gone, I started looking through the box and I found a gun. I said to myself that I can die, at this point; I decided my children deserved better than this, and I was not doing a good job by them.

When my oldest son was two, my ex-husband became incarcerated. I actually had left my husband due to domestic violence about six or seven months before he committed

the crime that got him a life sentence. I did not want to live that lifestyle anymore and be abused. My husband was always really good to our son and our son remembered that his dad took him to the park and bought him ice cream cones and they did fun things together. My ex-husband would use my son to intimidate me by saying, if I ever left him he would keep my son.

My boys and I went into a shelter which was a six-month program and when we came out, I found out he was incarcerated. I knew he was not coming out for at least twenty-five years because of the crime that he had committed. I felt sad because he had wasted his life, but I also felt free to live anywhere I wanted, and I did not have to be afraid that he was going to kill me. I started my life over again fresh, and now we did not have to be around violence ever again. This was the last involvement my sons have ever had with any incarcerated people.

I spent the next seven years in parenting classes, because I had to do better, and I did do better. When my older son was able to talk really well, he shared experiences of violence with me that he remembered. I had exposed my children, especially my oldest son, to domestic violence and I was never going to mess up again.

The materials I was learning in the parenting classes, I brought them home and shared them with my mom and dad. I was showing them that the book says, "You do not say that; here is what we are going to say." My parents and I were literally like kids learning together how to be parents. As a child, I had grown up in a home with arguments, fights, and domestic violence and my marriage was an extension of what seemed normal to me, but my boys were not going to grow up the way I grew up. My parents and I were going to get it right for my boys.

I know I made my fair share of mistakes, and I kept saying, “I messed up here, I need to learn and do it right.” I made a commitment to myself that I was going to raise the best boys anybody ever saw. I surrounded my boys with men of God from church who loved their families, were productive in society, who were role models, and we are still very good friends.

Going to church, reading the Bible, and being around mature Christians was important because they were a resource and a support system. It was in church where I was able to find men to be role models to my sons. My boys needed different kinds of support because they were different kinds of people. I have one boy who was introverted, private, and struggled with insecurities. My other son was very extroverted and needed to be toned back. These two people needed completely different kinds of people to pour into them. I was able to ask people in church to pray for my boys because I needed back up and prayer saved my boys.

My oldest son had a hole that I could not fill, no matter how many fun excursions we did, only God could fill the hole, and the hole was evident. I remember my son had a father-son school function. His grandfather said to my son, I am looking forward to this. My son told his grandfather, no. He was embarrassed and felt insecure that everyone was going to know he did not have a dad. My son really never included his grandfather in any functions that were specific to fathers, because he felt like there was a hole and people were going to know. I think part of the hole was my son remembered mom left home and dad one day, and he had a lot of unanswered questions. I always told my boys that their dad loved them, and he did. However, because I was preserving my sons’ innocence, I refused to tell them anything negative about their dad’s addictions.

As far as that hole that was there, there was no easy way to get through it because when my son looked around he saw the other children had a dad, except him. As a child, for years he was conscious that there was an absence in our family unit, and he figured that out at church. He saw that a man goes home with his wife and children, and we did not have a father who went home with us. We were not a complete family unit. I could also say that he felt like my parents, his grandma and grandpa were intruding in our family unit, and that they did not belong. I know he felt like that because of the hole and he felt embarrassed and insecure. To protect their innocence, I have never taken my boys anywhere and talked negative about their dad being in prison in front of them. I was dead set on not glorifying the past in any way. My boys only knew we left home one day because of our safety, and the ladies at the shelter were there for their safety. I was a pusher and a pusher moves forward and does not look backwards.

My oldest son, for a little bit, about eighteen months, chose to do destructive behavior. We skirted around the subject of his biological dad, but he did not outright say it and I did not outright address it, but it was clear that he was implying his destructive behavior was attributed to his biological dad's behavior. Instead, I redirected my son from his earthly father to his heavenly father, and told him, "Your Father's blood runs through your veins, and it is that blood that was shed for you on the Cross. That is your Father." We focused on his heavenly father until he understood, and started to believe in himself. Then he was able to hold his head up and he no longer did destructive behavior.

When my oldest son was nineteen, he connected with his biological dad via telephone and mail, and learned that his dad lived a different lifestyle in comparison to the way he had been raised. My son and his dad were as different as night and day. I had

kept him protected, and when he visited with his dad's family, they stood out like a red thumb. My son said this is not how people are supposed to act, and he made an educated decision to stay away from them.

We never went to the prison to see their dad because I did not want my ex-husband to romanticize the whole situation, blame the system, and make it look like dad was taking one for the family. I was not going to allow their dad to distort my sons' thoughts of law enforcement, values for proper living, and concept of positive role models. I had to make a complete break from the negative influence and the distorted influencer, in order to stop the cycle of incarceration. I broke all connection with the boys' biological dad and his family because they had a history of violence, drug addiction, and inappropriate behavior.

The last time we saw my ex-husband's family was about fifteen years ago. I let the boys spend the night for a couple of days with their dad's mom. When I came back, my boys were really angry with me. In the car they told me their biological aunt took them in the van and in the middle of a busy street was running around her van on drugs and that their biological grandmother had spanked them. They told me they never wanted to see those people again and I said, you never will. From that point forward I avoided taking any kind of risks that would take away from my boys' innocence. I only get one chance to raise my children and one day, when God asks me, "What did you do with your children?" I have to be able to say I did everything I could to protect them.

Now that the boys are adults, it is their choice whether or not they want to visit with their biological dad and his family. I do not prohibit or discourage them from seeing their dad, but they do not care to see him. I know this must really hurt his family, but I

had one chance to raise my children, and it was not going to be around those people.

Unfortunately, somebody was going to get hurt, and it was not going to be my boys.

So I have spent all these years working, being in classes, and being a positive mom. I have never lifted a glass of alcohol, and did not date until I met a good godly man about thirteen years ago, and we were married. We have pushed forward together, and my second husband has been a positive role model to my boys.

Financial Hardships

I would prefer to be low-income and work my way up from the bottom than to accept any money from anyone in the family. I pushed myself because I started young on the wrong path. I did not have a high school education, was a single mother, and I pushed myself out of the situation that I was in. I did not receive any child support from the boy's dad, from the County, the State, or the Government. After my ex-husband was incarcerated and we came out of the shelter, then me and my boys moved in with my parents. My parents provided us with a home, and my mother quit her full-time job to stay home and raise my boys. My dad supported our family while I studied and passed the General Education Development (GED) equivalency test. Then I went to college full time and received my Associates Arts degree, worked full time and continued in parenting classes.

While I was in the battered women's shelter, I went through an intensive program that taught me how to build my self-esteem and to recognize signs of an abusive person. I also learned about my struggles of being anti-social and why I was attracted to guys in gangs. I learned about adult abuse with children, adult children of alcoholics, adult

children of workaholics, adults molested as children, and I worked on issues that caused me to end up in a destructive relationship. I learned all kinds of self-esteem exercises to help me love myself the way God made me.

I am willing to say I was not perfect, and in the women's shelter they taught me how to say I am sorry. They taught me that so many parents do not know how to say they are sorry, and being sorry is not a sign of weakness. I had made the decision to completely distance myself and my children away from the wrong lifestyle.

Social Challenges

In my opinion, the biggest social need was having positive male role models for my boys. I covenanted with men from church to include my boys with their sons, and my boys bonded with those men and really started to look up to them as leaders. I can see the positive influence the role models had on my sons even now. It was important for the parent who was home with my boys, to make sure they had positive male mentors, and not the incarcerated dad.

I never allowed my boys to watch parental guidance movies on television. I felt it was going to affect their innocence and I needed to protect them. They could only listen to appropriate music at certain ages. My children had seen too much inappropriate behavior and I was there to protect them. I made their childhood fun and full of innocence, and it has paid high dividends. They serve God today, and know God really loves them and He takes care of everything. My boys are gentlemen because their innocence has been protected. They do not smoke, drink, or use drugs. They are honest and are hard working. They are driven and they are successful in their own right in

everything they are doing. If I would have been careless and allowed all kinds of stuff to slip in there, they would have looked at life differently and may not be the way they are today.

Spiritual Challenges

I think a big part of what I have seen in my children is for the caregivers or parents that are left with the children to walk the way they talk. To live the way they tell their children to live. To believe in faith what they tell their children to believe in faith. Faith is the saving grace in situations like my children were in. From the extended biological father's side, what we witnessed with the grandparents was that they did not walk the way they preached to their children. The grandparents put the blame on their children instead of taking responsibility and helping their family.

Educational Challenges

Definitely the parent or caregiver must work with their children and not expect the school system to do it. Every teacher and coach always told me that parental involvement is key. Teachers can only do so much, and they cannot be expected to go home with thirty-two students, or however many students they have in class, and do it for the children. Working parents made the choice to have children, and it has got to be their choice to sit with their children and help them with their homework.

I believed in Christian counseling, and recommended it because of what I learned in that shelter. Counselors helped people with issues, not just destructive behavior. People's minds work like a tape recorder and if somebody calls me ugly or stupid 100

times, then the recorder is constantly going off in my head, 'I am ugly and stupid.' If I was little when people started calling me these names, I could have lived the rest of my life believing I was ugly and stupid, unless somebody helped me to fix the recorder. Counselors help people to fix the recorder, and God's Word also helps us to wash our minds and to be free from lies.

Another issue was that for years I did not cry, because I thought that you suck it up, and you put down those emotions, and I stayed hard. I used to face life head on and not cry about it. I was in a destructive relationship because I thought nobody wanted to hear me, so I did not talk about things, and I did not cry. I just needed somebody to change the recorder, and it worked.

Analysis: Generational Deficits and Benefits

As I explored her story, I found that the generational deficits evolved from her family environment. Her grandfather, on her father's side, had been an alcoholic. Her brother was a drug addict. Her father and her brother argued and had physical fights. At home, she was a victim of domestic violence by her brother. She stopped using alcohol at nineteen years of age, and has been sober ever since. In the eleventh grade, she was pregnant and dropped out of school, married at eighteen and had two children in two years. She was a victim of domestic violence, poverty, oppression, divorced, lived in several shelters with her children, and would have been homeless if it were not for her parents. She did not receive any child support from her ex-husband, the county, state or government and was in need of financial, social support services, and resources.

Growing up, when she was nine years old, her brother (twelve years old at the time) would drag her by her hair, banging her head against the floor, and throwing her around the house. At thirteen years of age, she began to defend herself and fought back.

Then an extended family member violated her at thirteen years of age, and she became depressed. She lost self-respect, trust and respect for men, and formed a distorted view of love and relationships. She did not have a good relationship with her parents, did not care about school, turned inward, and created her own society apart from society. She described herself as formerly being rebellious against her parents, church, school, legal authority, and society. She did not want to be asked personal questions, because she did not want to talk about her past.

Then, at seventeen years of age, she started dating the man who became her husband. She was aware of his rough life style, and was drawn to him because he knew what he thought and did not have to guess. He never asked her any personal questions, and she was comfortable with this because she did not want verbal intimacy. She recognized that whenever she was with her future husband, nobody ever messed with either of them, and she felt safe. She admired his personality, describing him as fearless, forceful, and exciting. Already familiar with domestic violence, she thought her husband would protect her, never realizing that he would be physically abusive against her.

Her ex-husband's father was a heroin addict and was incarcerated, and both his siblings were addicts. His younger brother served time in prison and was shot in the face and died. The ex-husband followed his father's footsteps into heroin addiction and incarceration, and is now serving twenty-five years to life in prison for a capital offense.

Generational benefits include her becoming a Christian at nineteen years of age and raising her boys in church. Her parents provided a home for their daughter and grandsons, enabling her to complete her education. She has graduated from college, has a good position in business, and has become a productive member of society. Parenting classes have helped her and her parents to better raise her boys. The intensive program in the shelter enabled her to gain self-respect and self-esteem.

Now she and her sons are teaching children's ministry in their church. She has successfully protected and preserved her children's innocence, and the cycle of incarceration has been broken. The co-researcher has been blessed with a godly man as her second husband. Her marriage, family, home, business, and church are blessed. Her parents have experienced the joy of seeing their daughter and grandson graduate from college, and he is using his skills as a professional photographer and videographer. On her mom's side, the co-researcher is celebrating three generations of family members faithfully serving God.

Mona's Story and the Gospel in Liberation

Since 2000, this family has been involved with Community Outreach Ministry's Angel Tree Christmas Party and camping. This camper was taught many life-enhancing skills that have helped shape who he is today. These skills include learning to help others, eagerness to participate and cooperate, willingness to do his best all the time, and the ability to make goals and stick with them. In addition, he learned important biblical principles, such as asking God for wisdom and studying Bible passages for life assistance. These skills have given him victory over adversity.

Now, as a young adult, he invests his time as a photographer and has served with Community Outreach Ministry filming the Christmas party. He has also shared his story of liberation—how God gave him purpose in life, and he has not followed his father’s footsteps into incarceration. On April 18, 2014, an awards ceremony was held in honor of Community Outreach Ministry, their sponsors and volunteers. At this ceremony, he shared how Community Outreach Ministry has helped him to break the cycle of incarceration.

Since being interviewed for this project he has been stirred to develop a documentary on children caught in the cycle of incarceration. He has videotaped Mona interviewing another adult child of incarcerated parents, who has shared her story on film. His desire is for the documentary to help children to be liberated from following their parents’ footprints into incarceration. He has graduated from film school and has done assorted film work for Christian and secular musicians. He has also performed complimentary film work for children and youth programs and adult services in his church.”¹

Story Three Family Three—Chapter One—What Started the Parents on the Road to Incarceration?—Incarcerated Father, Age 40—Hispanic—Poor Choices

I was trying to find a place in life and I ended up making the wrong choices. I started running the streets, just being a bad boy, causing trouble and getting caught by the law. I had no respect for authority and was using drugs, fighting, and stealing. I was sentenced to seven years in prison and served five years. Fighting and committing crimes

¹Christine Dominguez, “Community Outreach Ministry How Youth Camp Shaped the Lives of Two Brothers,” *Murrieta Patch*, June 21, 2013.

got me into Juvenile Hall and later I was incarcerated five or more times. I wished it would have never happened. Some of the things that lead me into incarceration were being high on drugs, fighting, stealing, possession of drugs and weapons, assaults, and violations.

Growing up, I did not have much, being raised by my single mom. She did her best and worked to keep food on the table, but it was not enough. My dad was not around and I did not have a father to look up to. I became rebellious, trying to find a place in life and ended up making the wrong choices. I cannot blame anybody but myself for running the streets with the gang who had accepted me. And, because they accepted me, I felt like I wanted to do even more bad things to win their approval. Talking to you right now is the first time that I have reflected on my past.

Living with a single mother was a struggle to keep things going and a lot of times I was all by myself with my brothers, and I got lonely. There were some good times, but at the same time, there were a lot of bad times. My dad lived in another state, and the last time I remember seeing him was when I was three or four years old. My parents were divorced, and I grew up without a dad. This was a downfall for me, because I needed him to look up to. In my case, I began to look elsewhere because I was missing my dad, and it had a negative impact on my life.

So I just ran out with what I knew to do, and that was to hang out with the gang, and they were there for me. Even though I realized it was not the right thing to do, it was already too late because my life had been ruined. Everything was bad, especially my decision to run the streets. The reason I did what I did was because that was the life I had chosen. Before running the streets I was in high school playing football, basketball, and

competing in track. Then, that summer after ninth grade, I just started hanging around with the wrong crowd, and that is when I started using drugs and getting high.

Drug Use

I was introduced to drugs by the wrong crowd, and my life went downhill. Before that, I was doing well in school and in sports. After I got involved with drugs, I did not go back to school or playing sports, and my poor choices to use drugs screwed my life up. At the time, I just felt like I belonged with the gang running the streets. There was no drama; nothing big happened to make me want to throw everything away, it was just the drugs. I know now that I messed up my life doing foolish things I was not supposed to do; I have struggled, and so has my family.

I did not have any good role models and did not have anything to do with my time. My mom worked a lot of extra hours at a low income job and she did not make much money. There was definitely something missing in my family that could have helped me to go in the right direction. I think in every broken home something was missing; for me, it was my dad. Emotionally, I felt ashamed and angry, because my dad was not there for me. I also could have been a better dad to my own children, instead of being incarcerated.

I was an absentee dad who was locked up and missed out on my children's lives. I was at fault for hurting my children. I think my children's minds must have wondered about what happened to their dad. My children must have felt ashamed when people learned that their dad was incarcerated. They must have also been affected by anger and loneliness. These were emotions I experienced not having my dad around, and I have put

my children through the same struggles. When a parent is locked up, the children are also locked up, but I have always loved and cared for my children, even when I was not there for them. I wished I could have explained this to my children, but we did not communicate while I was incarcerated. I think I could have helped my children if I could have been able to explain to them why I was locked up.

I do not want my children or any child to follow in my footsteps, because it hurts. I suffered as a child without my dad, and my children have suffered also because I was an absentee dad. I am forty years old and I am still struggling every day. My children have graduated from high school, and their mom took care of them while I was gone. I am blessed because my son is in the university and has stuck with sports.

Analysis: Generational Deficits and Benefits

His background and generational deficits included oppression, poverty and poor choices to hang out with the wrong crowd and use drugs. His father abused alcohol, and both of his father's parents were also heavy drinkers. His father was not there for him and his brothers, and one of his brothers has been serving a life sentence for a capital offense. His parents were divorced and his mother was poor, left without child support, raising her boys. She worked in menial labor because that was the only job she could find. His father lived out of state, and he was abandoned by his dad.

His dad was an absentee father, and he was affected by loneliness; the last time he saw his dad was when he was either three or four years old. He was really bothered by not having a father around, and it had a negative impact on his life. He referred to his family as being broken, meaning his family was not whole, because there was an obvious

hole in his family. It was his father being missing that created the hole in his family, and prevented his family from being stable. The co-researcher said not having his dad at home was a downfall and contributed to his rebellious behavior.

Loneliness led him to search for companionship on the streets, and the guys who had been literally running the streets accepted him into the gang. He said he felt like he belonged with them, because they were there for him. Unfortunately, these friends that he chose were a poor choice, because they introduced him to drugs, violence, and crime. Before this, he had done well in school. Hanging out with the wrong crowd introduced him to using drugs, fighting, and stealing. He said the more severe things he did wrong, the more the gang accepted him. He wanted to impress the gang and purposely did bad things. He allowed the gang to distort his thinking, even when he knew it was the wrong thing to do. He continued to do bad things because he believed that he had already ruined his life and was rebellious against his family, home, school, sports and everything that was good.

He was looking for a place in life, and chose the wrong path, digging himself deeper into trouble by using drugs and doing criminal activity. The same shame and anger that he felt as an abandoned child, he perpetuated in his own children's lives. Like his dad, he did not pay child support, dropped out of high school and his wife was pregnant as a teenager.

The benefits included the fact that the wife and children lived with her father so that they were not homeless. The wife's parents helped their daughter and grandchildren. Her father gave them a place to live in a trailer, as they were below the poverty line. The trailer was a refuge, certainly better than living on the streets. It was a place where the

wife and children could be safe and protected from the elements. Mom always spent time with her children and knew who their friends were. She protected her children from gang members. Sports would not have been possible for her son if it were not for her father who provided the finances for his grandson to be in sports. Sports really helped her son stay out of trouble, and he did not want to be like his dad.

This interview was the first time I had ever met the incarcerated father, as he was at home from prison. During the interview, the father was discouraged, and I shared the gospel and he prayed and invited Jesus to come into his life. I told him how God gives new believers a second chance. I shared hope and faith to give him the strength to believe God to turn his life around, and to have a new beginning. My husband Bob and I went back the next day and took him a Bible and tracts. A couple of days later, I called him and Bob and I went back to visit him. As the three of us were visiting, he told us that he had been out walking and was looking up and he saw poles that needed electrical work. He called the company, asked for the job and they hired him as a skilled electrician. Bob donated a brand new bike to him to get to and from the bus to go to work. His wife had told us he had been walking to the bus, and he had to catch a couple of buses one way, and that he did not have a driver's license.

I believe that God led him to look up and connected his eyes to the electrical poles. This was not a coincidence, but a divine insight that moved him to seek and ask for the job. The fact that the company hired him in spite of his background was the favor of God. This dad was so in need of having a real job to earn an honest income and to be productive. He needed to be useful and to do the right things in life for himself and his family. God has embraced this dad, husband and father, giving him value and worth. Bob

and I got to see God provide him a new beginning, and bless him with a skilled paying job to support his family.

Chapter Two—What Happened to the Children as a Result of the Parent Being Incarcerated?—Male Child, Age 19, Hispanic—Absentee Parents

Basically, most of my life my dad was in and out of jail. So it was just me and my mom around. I had my grandpa and my grandma and sometimes other family members too. My dad was not around much, but whenever he got out he came home to us. So he was around when he was not in jail. My dad was in and out of prison for gang involvement, but I do not blame him because he grew up differently. While my dad was gone, I tried not to let it get me down because there was no point in being sad. There was no denying what had happened, and I could not do anything to change it. So I just had to learn how to deal with things.

I struggled with not feeling loved, loneliness, and emptiness. I just felt like things should have been different. I wished I had had both my parents there for me and it was not fair. There were times when I went places and I saw my friends with their mom and dad and I wanted that for my family too. I am sure my dad wished that he had never gone to prison in the first place, and that he would have been here with his family. I know that my father tries making up for his absence. So now he is doing things with us, taking us places or buying us things. He is trying to be what he was not while he was not around. Since my father was in and out of prison, when he was here he would give whatever he could, but now that he has been out his life has changed.

While my dad was gone, I kind of kept a positive mindset and really did not see myself as being left behind. I just tried to not let it affect me because there was no point

in being sad about it. I kept hope rather than complaining that my dad was not around. I helped my mom and tried to be there for my younger sisters. I just tried to look forward to my dad actually getting out of prison. In middle school, I was kind of going down the wrong path (and it was in middle school when that happens to kids), but instead I chose sports.

I started getting into Jiu-Jitsu and I just kept going from there. I put my life into sports, and that kept me out of trouble. I started hanging around with athletes and I met other guys who did not get into trouble. I started to become good friends with the other athletes, and they had a heavy impact on what I did. People looked at my high school like a ghetto school, but really it was not that bad. I saw the way that my athlete friends lived, and sports made the difference in both their lives and mine. So honestly, I believe sports influenced my life and kept me out of trouble.

Shame

I really did not want to talk about my dad being incarcerated because I did not want to feel stigmatized. Some of my teachers at school knew my dad was incarcerated, but I tried not to make a big deal about it. I think hearing other kids my age in my situation share their story was probably the best thing for me. Their stories reinforced me with support to keep going. Also there were people in our lives who helped us at the right time so that we did not give up. Community Outreach Ministry and Angel Tree helped with gifts at Christmas. There were also donations of turkeys and boxes of food that Mona and Bob brought to us at the holidays. It was always good to receive an extra hand

up, because it made us feel like we were not going to give up and we were not there by ourselves.

I think church has also helped young people to find and pursue their passion and prevent youth from getting into trouble. I went to camp with Community Outreach Ministry, and it was spiritually uplifting – it helped me to experience God in a greater way than just going to a church service. This experience has helped me to look on the brighter side of life. Yes, there have been bad things that have happened in my life, but I have looked at the brighter side, and my life has turned out really good.

Analysis: Conflict

This co-researcher was in a difficult position because his father had repeatedly gone in and out of incarceration for making the same mistakes, and it had a negative effect on the whole family. The son did not want to look at the down side of his father's life, but focused on having a positive mindset. The son did not blame his dad for his cycle of incarceration, but alluded to the fact that his family had not been there for him. He admitted that he did not have the power to change his dad, but he did have the ability not to be sad or angry. Just the fact that his dad revolved in and out of prison was enough for him to see he did not want to be like his father.

He was determined; school and sports were his priorities in life. Although he struggled with shame from having an absentee father, he tried to hide it. He was there to help his mother with his younger sisters and do whatever was necessary to contribute to his family. He saw how his mother struggled with finances and taking care of him and his younger siblings. After his grandfather passed away, the finances dried up, but his mother

kept her word to keep him in sports. He could count on his mother, and trusted her, and she always made a way for him to stay in sports.

Mona's Story of the Gospel and Intervention

Angel Tree referred this family to Community Outreach Ministry, and Mona adopted the children. This came at a strategic time when the co-researcher was transitioning out of middle school, where he had started to go down the wrong path. He had just finished eighth grade when Community Outreach Ministry provided him with a camp scholarship to go to the mountains for a week. The lodge was in a mountain resort area, where tourists vacationed. Without this scholarship, the co-researcher would not have been able to take a vacation away from home (all expenses paid, plus spending money). He saw the Alpine Slide and the go-carts and got to ride on both. Motor boating on the lake was a great adventure because he got to see and hear stories about the movie stars' vacation homes. Being in the mountains camping was the closest thing to paradise, as he had not been out of his neighborhood before this experience. Mona and Bob made sure the campers always had spending money, so that when they went to town they could buy an ice cream cone and treat themselves to goodies that they could otherwise not afford.

Every year, this co-researcher looked forward to going back to camp where he made friends. He also appreciated hearing the stories of other campers, who helped reinforce his belief in God. At camp he was able to devote his time to God, and it was spiritually uplifting. This was something that he had not experienced before, leading him to return every year to camp for more inspiration.

Mentoring

He definitely has a heart for children, and has gone with me to mentor younger boys, brothers, ages four and six, whose father was incarcerated. I was the adult who paid for all of the boys' expenses, chauffeured them around, and fed the mentor and mentees. He made it possible for these brothers to go to an aquatic park with recreational swimming pools and activities. At the pool they talked, played, and had fun in the water. We had plenty of time, water, and food, and had giant umbrellas to sit in the shade. The brothers looked up to him, and they had a great time together.

While in high school, he started Jiu-Jitsu, boxing, and wrestling. For the past few years, he has mentored kids and teens in Mixed Martial Arts in school and at a sports arena. He has earned a blue belt in Jiu-Jitsu and a varsity letter for being on his high school's team. The letter signified that he was a winner and qualified as a team member, meeting criteria common throughout the United States.

In high school he was an Advanced Via Individual Determination (AVID) student. This meant he was the first member in his family to go to college. Advanced Via Individual Determination students are accelerated to raise their academic learning achievements and to go on field trips to visit colleges and universities.

Chapter Three—What Happened to the Caregivers as a Result of the Incarceration? Mother Caregiver, Age 35, Caucasian—Challenges for the Caregivers

My husband would come out of incarceration for a few months and go back in for a few years. This happened not once, twice, three, four, but five and more times. My husband chose the wrong friends. He made choices to be with gang members and to do

things that go with their code, and it was all trouble. He was involved with drugs, running around, fighting, stealing, and assaults with other gang members, as well as being there when somebody else did something wrong, getting caught, and going to prison. His family was not there for him either, but mainly it was the friends he chose. My husband has not been around for his children and has not paid child support.

It was especially hard for my children when there was a father-son or father-daughter function at school. Friends would ask my children where their dad was. Even the fathers of their friends would say, "I have not met your dad; is he here?" My kids would go to school wondering where their dad was, and it was hard being a single mom. At times, other boys would tell my son that their dad had taught them how to ride a bike, had played ball with them, and had gone to back-to-school nights with them. My son would have to explain why they never saw his dad. It was embarrassing for him, because he would say, "My dad is in jail." My son acted like he was okay with it, but of course he was not. I am sure that he went through a lot of shame.

When my children were little, we visited their dad in county jail. There was a glass partition that we looked through, and we talked over the telephone, sitting on hard stools. My kids would be crying because there was nothing for them to do, and they wanted to play. We waited sometimes two hours to see him for twenty minutes. Sometimes he would not get to visit us till late – after we had been waiting for hours to see him. Prison was a little easier, because the children got to touch and hug their dad and eat together. There were playgrounds at some of the places, but it still was a long process of checking in and being frisked. Carrying two kids on the bus was also a pain, as was

coming up with the money for transportation. Visits were just too much of a struggle on my children and me, as well as financially draining, and eventually we stopped visiting.

Now that my children are older, their dad wishes that he would have been around because they do not have the same respect for him as they do for me. My children do not listen to him the way they listen to me. So their dad does not have his children's respect. The children feel that they do not have to listen to him because he was not there for them. The children feel their dad did not do anything for them. My husband gets angry, but the children are over eighteen years old and are grown up now.

My siblings stereotyped my son, telling him that he was going to be just like his dad. My siblings would say, "Your dad has not amounted to anything and you are going to be just like him." I did not say anything to my siblings nor did my son, but my son showed them differently. My son was good academically and athletically because he did not want to turn out like his dad. My son studied to excel in school and I told him I would put him through whatever sports he wanted to be in, but he had to stick with it. He has made sports a priority in his life and has chosen the right friends and has made wise decisions. He has shown my siblings that they were wrong to stereotype him.

Financial Hardships

When my father was alive, we lived with him and he helped my family and my son financially to be in sports, but after he passed away, I had to scrounge up the money for my son to play sports. I had to go around asking people for money to keep my son in sports. My dad made a way for my two children and me to live with him because I was below the poverty line and unable to work. Then after my dad became deceased, I was

able to obtain Aid for Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). After this went away, my family qualified for CalFresh, federal program known as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP provides a means to meet nutritional needs for needy families. My family also received Medical (the state's version of the Medicaid welfare program that serves low-income families). Even with receiving financial assistance, it has been hard to pay rent and utilities. If anything was left over, it was for the kids' clothes.

Social Challenges

Counseling would have been good for my children to have, because their dad was doing bad stuff when he got out of prison and they were exposed to it, but this was not available for them at that time. The good news was that my kids were able to overcome issues that other children would not have been able to overcome. My children have a strong backbone because they had my parents and I was there for them. Together, my parents and I helped my children to avoid negative behavior. I also talked with my children and was always at home; any time they needed me, I was there. I made sure I knew who their friends were and who they were hanging around. I did not let my children hang around with anyone who got into trouble. I did not let my children go out and run the streets. I definitely did not let my children be around any gang members. I had seen the bad influence gangs had had on my husband, and I have protected my children and have kept them safe.

Spiritual Challenges

I sent my children to Sunday school, where they learned to believe in God. They started going to church when they were young, and the word of God has had a positive effect. God's word got into their head, heart, and spirit when they were six, seven, and eight years old. They have remembered God's word, and it has stuck in them. It was at the right time in their lives, when they were beginning to form their own decisions to believe or not to believe. My kids were better morally for hearing God's word and having been in Sunday school.

Educational Challenges

I wished my family would have had more money for our two daughters to have been able to participate in extracurricular activities. My daughters would have liked to have had more sports and educational opportunities. Unfortunately they both missed out because we did not have the finances.

Mona's Story and the Gospel in Liberation

For seven years, this camper has participated in the Christmas party, camping and mentoring. While at camp, he has been taught life enhancing skills, values from God's word and has learned to be a team player who supports and encourages team work. He has acquired the ability to flourish through adversity, has become the first member of his family to be in the university, and mentors teens in Mixed Martial Arts.

Mona and Bob have watched him develop a committed work ethic in sports and education. Mona has written letters of recommendation on his behalf to be awarded

scholarships towards his degree. He has taken the initiative to engage in advanced classes to raise his academic achievements. Higher education has made him more marketable and he will earn higher wages. Mona believes that investing in his life has produced dividends that have already prospered him, and she trusts that he will continue to develop and have future success. He also knows that Mona and her husband are there for him and that they are willing to assist him to pursue his passion in life.

Camp was a divine appointment for him and propelled him to thrive in academia and sports. He needed to be spiritually lifted and liberated to know the difference between right and wrong from God's word, and to have godly wisdom to lead and guide his path. He has poured his life into school and sports, and the cycle of incarceration has been broken.

His mom has always encouraged him in sports and he knew he could trust her. She has been there consistently to celebrate all of his achievements, and to cheer him on in post-secondary education. Mom has also been a committed volunteer with Community Outreach Ministry, bagging and passing out gifts to the children at the Christmas party.

Story Four Family Four—Chapter Two—What Happened to the Children as a Result of the Parent Being Incarcerated?—Female Child, Age 19, Hispanic Absentee Parents

I did not know my dad and did not have a father figure in my life because my dad was in prison. And, after he got out of incarceration, he did not come home. Instead, he left the state. I did not know my dad and I never went to see him while he was in prison. My mom was a big part of my life and she was both mom and dad to me. My mom was my role model, and it was hard on her taking care of us kids.

I needed someone other than my mom to talk to for emotional support. There were things I just could not talk to her about. I did not want to talk to people from the wrong crowd because I did not want to do bad things. I wanted to talk to people from the right crowd and have somebody to hang around with and do good things together. I remember when my brother and I were little; we went to church with my mother. Church helped me to understand that there was a reason why my dad was in prison. I used to wonder what it was that my dad had done wrong. Then the preacher told me that God had a plan and that everything happened for a reason. After I heard him say this to me, I kind of just let it be, and then moved on.

Shame

Social workers would come and talk to me at home and ask me questions about my life, and I felt embarrassed. I had a really hard time in school, and I could not remember anything the teachers would teach me. I have tried tutoring and stuff like that, but it did not help me. I was not able to learn at the pace of the teachers, and it worked better if I taught myself. I could remember things I taught myself, but I could not remember anything the teachers taught me. I did not have the school supplies I needed to do my school work. That did not necessarily hold me back, but my mom was on welfare and could not afford to buy me school supplies. The money from welfare went to pay the bills, but it would have been nice to have had the school supplies when I needed them. Finances were a struggle, especially at Christmas. We were not able to get everything we wanted for Christmas, or everything we wanted ever, because money was a big struggle.

Analysis: Conflict

She has struggled emotionally with loneliness and needed a friend to hang out with; someone who was the right type of person and a good influence. She was specific and did not want to be with the wrong people, nor did she want to get into trouble. A Big Sister would have been helpful to have, as she had things she wanted to talk about, but did not want to talk about these things with her mom. Mentors helped mentees by being a sounding board for the mentee to talk about the feelings they experience. Social workers asked her questions about her home, but they were not the type of people she was interested in talking too. The social workers made her feel uncomfortable. Mom had mentioned that her children may have been teased for not having a father. The mom's brothers were role models to her son. Mom also mentioned it was probable that her children may have missed not having a second parent. I imagine the children did wonder where their father was, and why he had not come home to his family. Children may be young, but they are very smart and observant. They hear conversations, and experience feelings of uncertainty and insecurity.

In school, she struggled with learning. It sounded as though her mind was blocked, causing her not to grasp education in the school environment. She even tried tutors, but she was not able to learn from them, either. It also would have been helpful to have school supplies like the other children, but the money went toward the bills. In order to retain knowledge, she taught herself, and this is how she learned. She is not the only child that has been unable to learn from teachers in school.

Mona's Story and the Gospel in Intervention

Mona knows this family on a personal level, and signed the children up for Angel Tree, as the father has been incarcerated for years. Mona knows the mother, and this mom told Mona her children's father was incarcerated. Her ex-husband had not signed his children up for Christmas gifts or camping, but Mona invited this family to participate in the annual Angel Tree Christmas party and to receive gifts. Children feel lonely, oppressed and broken hearted because their parent is not there for them. It was not the daughter's fault that her dad was not there for her; she was a victim of her father's circumstances. I was happy that my friend brought her family to the Christmas party, because they were able to hear the Gospel, and take Jesus home in their hearts. I knew that this mom struggled financially, and I wanted to share the joy of giving gifts at Christmas with her family.

**Chapter Three—What Happened to the Caregiver as a Result of the Incarceration?
Mom Caregiver, Age 39, Hispanic—Challenges for the Caregiver**

I have had to be both mom and dad at the same time to my two children. I have had to work to support my children, and send my children to school and it was hard. My ex-husband and I came to this country from Mexico as babies. Our parents were strawberry pickers, and they worked in the fields.

My husband and I were married in 1993 after I graduated from high school, and we had two children, a son and a daughter. My ex-husband dropped out of school while he was in the eleventh grade and went to work doing construction, flipping houses. My ex-husband served a few years in prison for dealing drugs. Our son was just a little boy when his dad went into prison, and I was five months pregnant with our daughter. After

my husband was released from prison, he did not come back home to us. He left the state and was having relationships with other women. He moved back to California, but not with me and our children, and he was incarcerated again for dealing drugs. After he was released, he went to live with another woman in California. My ex-husband, while we were married, had six other children with other women. We were divorced two years ago, after being married for twenty years. My ex-husband only supported my son and me up until the first time he was incarcerated.

Our daughter has never lived with her dad, and he has never paid child support for either of our children. My children now know who their dad was because my younger brother was married to his younger sister. So my children have seen their dad when he has visited at his younger sister's house. My children missed not having their second parent, and sometimes people made fun of them.

Financial Hardships

My older sister allowed me to rent a private room and bath in her trailer and helped me with my children when I worked. I could not give my children what they wanted, and we were limited. I had to work more hours than a normal parent, because I did not earn much money. I was also getting CalFresh food assistance and Medi-Cal medical insurance for my family. I tried to give my children everything I could, but I am guessing that they probably wanted more than what they had.

Social Challenges

My children never said that they needed their dad, and my younger brothers were always role models, as their father was not in their life. I was always trying to teach my children right from wrong; and not to go out with friends and steal, fight, or be disrespectful to older people. Both of my children played soccer when they were younger, but when they got older, they were not interested in playing sports anymore. I wanted my children to spend most of their time doing sports instead of thinking of bad things to do.

Spiritual Challenges

We used to go to church on Sundays and it helped them when they were younger and reinforced the same things I was teaching them at home, such as not to do bad things, hang out with the wrong friends, steal, fight, or be disrespectful to older people. Church has definitely helped my daughter, because she was very careful about who she spent time with, and does not want to get into trouble. While in high school, my son started to hang out with the wrong crowd and got into trouble, but then he stopped misbehaving.

Educational Challenges

My son, while in high school, was hanging out with the wrong crowd and ended up in the Juvenile Justice System for having a blade in school. He was on house arrest for two months, and was ordered by the judge to go to psychotherapy classes and do community service. The classes and community service credit had to be validated in writing and presented to the Juvenile Officer. It was a struggle because I had to find

classes for him to attend that he did not want to go to, but he did obey and did not get into any more trouble.

During my son's senior year of high school, he dropped out because he and his girlfriend had a son together. My son went to work to support his girlfriend and their child, and his girlfriend also dropped out of school. My son has a job with his uncles and he is renting a small house for his girlfriend and their son. My son wanted to be with his girlfriend and their son and he has accepted responsibility for his family. My son and his girlfriend both plan to study and pass the General Education Development (GED) equivalency test.

My daughter has had difficulties learning in school and has taken classes on-line as part of an alternative education program. There is a good possibility she will take the General Education Development (GED) equivalency test. She has struggled with learning from the teachers, and does better studying on her own.

Analysis: Generational Deficits and Benefits

As I dug into this family's background, I discovered generational deficits including poverty, oppression, drugs, crime, incarceration, divorce, no child support, teen pregnancy, and school drop-out. These patterns and behaviors were present in both the mother's side of her family and in her ex-husband's side of the family. The mother and her ex-husband's parents both came from the same part of Mexico. These families came to the United States at the same time because farmers were hiring laborers to pick strawberries in California. In Mexico during her parent's generation, the highest education that was available to them was elementary school. The families had the proper

immigration papers to live in the United States, and their children became first generation citizens to grow up in the United States.

Three men, including her father, the ex-husband's father, and the ex-husband have all been incarcerated for drugs. They have left their wives and children behind, not paying child support for their children. These men have had children from other women while they were married to their wives. The grandfathers used and sold drugs, and her father served three years in a California prison. Her dad has been deported and the United States refuses to renew his papers. While her parents were married, her father left her mother forty years ago with five children, when the youngest child was two years old. The ex-husband's father, who was also incarcerated, left his wife and children about forty years ago and they are still married.

The ex-husband was caught selling drugs and was incarcerated when his son was little, and the co-researcher was five months pregnant with their daughter. When the ex-husband came out of incarceration, he did not go home to his wife and children, but left the state. When he moved back to California, he was apprehended again for selling drugs and incarcerated. Like his dad, he has not paid child support. He was recently released from prison and lives with his girlfriend and their children. While the ex-husband was legally married to her for twenty years, he had six other children with different women.

The generational benefits are that the co-researcher's son is being responsible to support his girlfriend and their son, and neither of her children touch drugs or alcohol and are not into gangs, crime or incarceration. Her son is being responsible and is the first male in three generations to support his son. Her son and daughter intend to finish their

high school equivalency examinations. This mother has graduated high school, college, has a credential in therapy, and works part time in the medical field.

Mona's Story and the Gospel in Intervention

I am glad to be a client of the co-researcher, and she and her family have participated in my project. She has opened up her life to me and brought her family to the Christmas parties. I know that God loves her and her family, and He wants the best for them. Through this ministry, her children, the son's girlfriend, and her grandson have been blessed with Christmas gifts.

I know she does not make much money as a part-time hourly worker, and she lives in a low income community. She is an excellent therapist and is skilled, strong and has the right values. She prays for her children to finish high school, earn a college degree and be trained to earn a healthy income.

Mona's Story and the Gospel in Liberation

I am grateful that God has brought me across her path, and that Community Outreach Ministry was here for her and her family. She and her family have heard the Gospel, and her children have not followed their father or grandfathers' footprints into drugs, crime and incarceration. Her children's lives are improving, and her prayers are blanketing their lives. I think back to my mom, and it was her prayers that brought my brothers and me to God. God is faithful and answers prayers that are prayed according to His will.

Story Five Family Five—Chapter Two - What Happened to the Children as a Result of the Parents Being Incarcerated?—Male Child, Age 19, African American Absentee Parents

I wished I would have had a male friend, someone to talk to me, to do fun things with me and to go places together. I preferred having a man talk to me, and not just my aunt. Even though my aunt and uncle have been raising me and my middle brother, my uncle was disabled and he was not able to be a role model to me. My aunt and grandmother are sisters, and my grandmother sent us to California to live with my aunt when I was five and my middle brother was two. My youngest brother at that time was one year old, and he was sent to live in the foster care system. My youngest brother stayed in the foster care system for eleven years before he came to live with us. For the first time in eleven years, my brothers and I have been reunited together in California. My brothers and I were abandoned by our mom and dad. Both of my parents were incarcerated, and I have never lived with my dad. I lived with my mom and grandmother in New York, but my mother left me and my brothers alone until somebody found us in an abandoned building. My parents used alcohol, drugs, stole, got caught and went to prison.

I was not accepted into first grade because I did not have any educational background. I was five years old, and had never been to nursery, pre-school or kindergarten. My aunt had to help me to learn in order to be accepted into school. By the time I was accepted into school I was behind.

I am grateful for my aunt and uncle who have taken care of me and raised me all these years. I have felt loved and I have always lived with them since I was five, and I did not have to be in foster care like my youngest brother. While in foster care, my youngest

brother moved with many families and was transferred to many different schools over that time. My youngest brother said, in foster care he never felt loved, just taken care of.

Shame

I used to get angry at other kids when they asked me about my parents and would beat them up in school. I got in trouble for fighting in school, and the police almost arrested me. I have learned to stop being destructive. My aunt talked to the police and she explained my family situation and the other boy's family dropped the charges. Living with my aunt and uncle has helped me to receive structure into my life, and I have been trained to be respectful. My aunt has raised me to believe in God and I grew up in church. Church has been good for me as it has helped me to develop character and to know right from wrong. I have learned not to act out from anger and have learned to control my actions. I had a choice to be good or to be bad, and I chose to be good and not go to prison like my parents.

I graduated from high school in 2012 and now have my own apartment in the Desert. I am living with a friend, working in retail, and I am a part time student in Junior College. I am looking for a church in my new community and want to be active in church. My aunt and uncle raised me in church camp, and camp made a difference in my life.

My father called me on the telephone not too long ago and told me he has regretted not being there for me, and I forgave him. He sounded like he was going to die, but he is okay and is now working as a drug counselor. My mom has been in touch with me on Facebook. She lives out of State, and said she was sorry for not being there for me

and I forgave her too. It was definitely hard not having my mother and my father and I used to be angry and was ready to fight. My aunt has been the greatest person in my life and she has helped me to see the brighter side of life.

Analysis: Conflict

Both his parents were incarcerated in New York, did not marry nor did they live together. He lived with his mother and grandmother in New York where he grew up the first five years of his life, and he never lived with his father. His mother abused alcohol and drugs and her mother was an alcoholic. His father abused drugs and he lived in the streets when he was not in rehabilitation or in prison. His grandmother on his mother's side was an alcoholic and did not take responsibility for her grandsons. This was the alcoholic grandmother who made temporary, informal living arrangements with her sister in California to take care of her grandsons. Fourteen years later, her nephew has graduated from high school in 2012. He lived with his aunt in California starting at age five and moved at eighteen to be closer to his Junior College.

As a child, he did not have any structure in his life, and he was unstable, angry, fought, stole, and was destructive. The aunt said he did not have any nursery school, pre-school or kindergarten before going to live with her in California. The aunt said it was a struggle teaching her nephew to behave, because he was wild. She said the boys did not have any respect, nor did they have any sense of values. The school rejected the child and did not accept him into school because he was not prepared academically. Growing up, he did not receive instruction and he needed to be trained. The boys were loud and the neighbors complained. This was not his fault, because he was a victim of his

circumstances. Once he was accepted into school, he had behavioral problems. He had anger, he was a fighter, and he was destructive. The aunt had a difficult time raising him because he had been neglected and lacked stability.

Mona's Story and the Gospel in Intervention

The aunt heard about Community Outreach Ministry through the school's social services department. This particular school district has a social service resource specialist available to help students affected by attendance, behavior problems or for being behind academically. The social service department referred the caregiver to us because she told them the boy's parents were incarcerated.

When the caregiver contacted me, it was close to Christmas and I asked for and received a wish list for the boys to get clothes and fun gifts. The whole family came to the Angel Tree party, and got involved in Community Outreach Ministry, washing cars to raise finances for summer camp. It has been important for me to have the campers contribute to their camping experience. I just do not want to hand out scholarships on a golden platter. I want these campers to feel as though they have earned their way to have a mountain top experience. Having campers do fundraising has added value to their camping experience, as a prize they have strived to attain. The first year, this camper raised \$130.00. The ministry's bookkeeper keeps an account by the camper's name so we know who is serious about going to camp. At camp, I heard him telling his story to other campers, about how he had raised \$130.00, to come to camp, and he was happy with his achievements.

Camp was big for him because this was his first time away from home. He was open to having fun and he knew to behave himself at camp. In fact, he loved camp and looked forward to going every year. I got to know him because I would go along with the campers motor boating, and hiking, and would be there praying with him after evening chapel. For years, he would bury his head in his arms sitting on the steps at the Chapel's altar and he would weep. I stayed with him, because he was always the last one. All the other campers would go have a snack then go to bed, but God was doing a work in this camper's life.

I never interrupted him while he was crying; I just let him be, until he had no more tears to shed. Then, when he was all done, I would ask him how should we pray, and he would tell me. I told him how God heard our prayers and when we prayed specifically, God answered specifically. His prayers were specifically for the salvation of his mother and father. Together, we agreed in prayer, right then and there, for the Holy Spirit and angels to be dispatched and to go right to where his parents were and for them to hear and receive the gospel through God's believers.

He shared that his mother had two more daughters in New York, and that his older sister was taking care of her younger sister, and she could not go out and play. So we prayed for his sisters in New York. I told him when we prayed the will of God, God answered. When he was done with his requests, he would get up and go to bed. I am so thankful God let me be a part of his life.

Chapter Three—What Happened to the Caregivers as a Result of the Incarceration? Great Aunt Caregiver, Age 69, African American—Challenges for the Caregivers

My husband and I took on severe problems raising our nephews, and the first two years were a nightmare. We had no idea how unstable our boys were when we took them in at five and two years old. The boys had been abandoned by their parents, and they had an unstable life style. The boys lied, stole, were angry, and broke everything in our house. The first time I had taken the boys shopping to the grocery store, they stole candy. When we got home I found all kinds of goodies that I did not buy. I called the store manager and told him that the boys stole candy and we were bringing it back. I asked the manager to be stern with the boys and threaten them if they ever did that again he was calling the police, and they would be in trouble for stealing. The manager was convincing, and I was grateful.

The boys were very destructive and they played in the house as though they were playing in a football field. My husband has mental illness, and he could not control the boys, and the boys almost caused me to go out of my mind. Our oldest son was old enough to go to school, but because he did not have any schooling he was not prepared for first grade. So I struggled getting him educationally up to level before he was accepted into school. After we got our oldest son into school, he was constantly in trouble for fighting. I would have to leave work and go take him out of school. He continued to fight till third grade, when he gave another boy a concussion for banging his head on the pavement. The police were called in, and we had to move and find another school, and a bigger place with a second bedroom and a fenced in yard for our boys to play outdoors. Our youngest son went to nursery school and I tutored our older son. Our pastor helped

us to find a place to live, and he helped us to raise our boys. The boys actually stimulated my husband's brain to function, and he helped me with the huge responsibility we had taken on.

Financial Hardships

We had it tough financially, because we did not receive any government, state or county assistance for raising the boys, and their parents did not pay child support. I had to work and my husband was not able to work due to his illness. The boy's dad showed up about once a year when he was straight, and their mom was in prison for drugs. It was after we moved to another city and school district that I was referred to Community Outreach Ministry and we met Mona and Pastor Bob. They gave the boys clothes and toys at Christmas, and our oldest son went to camp. At camp our son was God fed and taught from the Bible, and he learned respect and came back changed.

While at camp our oldest son said he saw an Angel, and the Angel told him he was going to have a good life. When he came home and told me this, it was like a blanket was put on everything that I had been trying to do to protect him and cover him under the shadow of God. This trip to camp helped put him on the right track at school and at home. My son looked forward to going to camp every year, and he told me when he was at camp he felt a part of life that he did not know existed. He felt whole for the first time, and learned that people outside of church loved him. So camp was a rewarding experience and he looked forward to going every year.

Social Challenges

My boys have felt emptiness, being unwanted and broken as though there was something missing, a hole in their lives. My oldest son used to think he could be totally destructive, angry and fight, and it would not matter because his parents were not there. He felt because his parents did not care about him, that he did not need to care about himself. He questioned why he was here, and thought he had nothing to live for and should just die. This broke my heart, because his parent's lifestyle affected him terribly.

Spiritual Challenges

I have taught him how I was raised, knowing God's love and that God wants the best for all of us. The teaching he has gotten from my church and from Mona and Pastor Bob's organization has given him the substance that was lacking in his life. There was absolutely no structure in their lives at all when I first received these boys. Throughout the years they have developed structure and learned to appreciate life.

Educational Challenges

They are still developing and still learning, and they have come a long way. I truly feel if I had not intervened, that my boys would probably be in the juvenile detention center because of the way they were so wild. When we first retained them, they had anger and they did whatever they wanted to do. They had no balance in life about right and wrong and they did not seem to care about anything. God has intervened and the boys are different than when they first came to live with us.

A couple of months ago, my oldest son came to visit me and talked to me about his journey from the time that he first came to live with me until the present. He said, “the cycle has been broken auntie.” The curse is lifted off of our life. He said, the bus stops here, and there is not going to be any more destructive behavior in our family. I was totally amazed because I did not say anything to him about cycles or curses. I think about my main goal was to teach my sons they had a choice and I taught them how to make valuable choices. The mentoring that they received from friends and members of our church family, has made an impact and he is straight as an arrow.

Children of incarcerated parents need to have mentors to inspire them with hope and to help them achieve goals. Mentors help them to go further than their parents, who gave up on life. They had no hope for the future, and that was why they ended up incarcerated. I really believe the kids must be taught Biblically, otherwise they will be lost, and Satan has a trap for them. Christian mentors are needed to stimulate children, to raise their enthusiasm to love God. The children need to know God has a plan for their lives to finish strong with Christ.

Analysis: Generational Deficits and Benefits

This co-researcher said her sister was the boys’ grandmother who was abducted when she was fifteen years old, and had also been seduced. Her sister had the same mother, but they did not have the same father, and their mother had been divorced. She knew her dad, and he worked to support his family. My boys and their family had lived in poverty, oppression and they were disserved by their parents. As I talked with the aunt, she shared that the boys’ father and mother abused drugs and alcohol. They had

committed crimes and were incarcerated. I learned that the boys' mother was a good girl until she met the boys' father. It was the boys' dad who had introduced the mother to using drugs and alcohol. Mom became pregnant as a teen, and both parents were high school drop-outs. On the boys' mother's side, the grandmother was an alcoholic. On the boys' father's side, the grandparents were alcoholics.

During the entire time the aunt raised the boys, she did not receive child support from the parents, county, state, or government, but she was able to get medical insurance for the boys. Three years ago, she started to receive a nominal fee for food called Kin Gap and is supplemented regularly by food banks. I told her about CalFresh, and that she was eligible to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). She had just finished filling out the application for CalFresh, and expects to get supplemental assistance as soon as her paper work is approved.

The generational benefits included the aunt being a woman of God and a strong believer who raised the boys in church. She passed the General Education Development (GED) equivalency test by going to night school and completed two years of college. The aunt and uncle have been committed in their marriage and they have been married over fifty years. The pastor and church family have also helped to raise the boys, and they have learned to respect God. The oldest son has graduated high school, and is in Junior College part time, is working part time, and is sharing an apartment with a friend. He does not use alcohol or drugs, does not have a criminal record and has not been incarcerated.

Mona's Story and the Gospel in Liberation

In 2005, this family came to their first annual Angel Tree Christmas party where they were blessed with gifts and the gospel. The oldest son, in 2006, went to summer camp, and it was a milestone in his life. His personality changed, and he began to care about his life and discover his purpose. At camp, he received a part of life that he had not known previously existed. He felt whole for the first time being at camp, because Jesus filled in the holes and the gaps. It was at camp where he realized that other people also loved him, not just the people at church. He had an experience with the Holy Spirit that liberated him to break through barriers and overcome obstacles.

His aunt said he came back from camp with a blanket of nourishment to reinforce him with what she had been teaching him about the Bible. She also mentioned her eyes were opened up to the pain, emptiness and anger that he had been going through because of his parents who had not been there for him. At camp, he received hope for the future, and looked forward to going to camp every year. He thanked God he was able to go and live with his aunt, and that she introduced him to God. He shared with his aunt that camp and Christmas was the icing on the cake from Pastor Bob and Mona, and that he was no longer destructive and has learned to live a good life.

I have been close to this camper because he was always the one who stayed at the altars after evening chapel. He was the one that was praying, and I was there behind him making sure nobody interrupted what God was doing in him. His prayers were never for himself, but were for his family members to be saved, and for his younger sisters to have a better life.

I have many pictures of him and the guys being engaged in fun activities and he always said, he wanted to be a mentor and encourage the younger guys at camp. He knew what he has been through and the change God has made in him. He is bold and wants to tell his story. I am grateful he has a God story of intervention, liberation and victory. God has given him a whole new life, and I got to be a part of something big that God has done for him, helping him to become a winner and a champion.

Story Six Family Six - Chapter Two—What Happened to the Children as a Result of the Parents Being Incarcerated?—Female Child, Age 19, Mexican—Absentee Parents

It has made me sad at times, and I have wondered what a family with a mother and father would be like. But I think it has made me grow and be more independent. Since I was very young I have had the goal to work in the medical field. Living without my parents has been nerve-racking and uncomfortable at times. I felt like I was different because nobody really cared that I did not have a stable family. My mother did not take care of me and my younger siblings. Mom slept during the day and woke up at night and drank. There was a lot of beer cans in our house, because my mother never cleaned up. My dad has been incarcerated my entire life, and I have never lived with him. My mom has had a total of six children and my dad has had a total of five children. My little brother and I are the only two with the same mom and dad. My parents met in high school and they were both high school dropouts. My mom was a pregnant teen and my parents lived together but they were never married.

I took care of my younger siblings and became the mom of the family. I fed and bathed the kids. It made me mad and sad because I was not supposed to be the mom. I

never played with Barbie dolls, nor did mom play with us children. I never had milk and I used to give my food to my younger siblings. Since being removed from my mother at age seven, I was sent into the foster care system to live with my aunt. My aunt had never truly accepted me as one of her own, and I felt the emotional separation. The social worker arranged for me to move with my dad's mother, but she physically abused me and I was removed from her custody.

Later I went to live with my mother's parents. My grandmother's love was suffocating me and I ran away. I lived anywhere and everywhere I could find shelter, including the home of another aunt. In the next two years, I was assigned to four foster homes. Running away was my answer to everything and I ran away regularly. I did not know it at the time, but I was suffering from symptoms of depression. This depression created a pattern of abusing drugs and getting into trouble. I abused my health and had no respect for myself or for others. I actually tried to take my life, but my plan failed. From that point onward, I prayed for a sign from God that I was forgiven and my life could be different. I began to think of my mother and how much pain she had caused others. I knew I had some goodness inside of me and that someday I wanted a real family of my own, with children that I could love and guide. I also decided to start taking care of myself. I stopped using drugs and alcohol and I began to write poetry. I took walks and wrote letters to my mother that I would never send. This helped me to get through the anger, the hurt, and the self-destructive behavior. On my eighteenth birthday, in December 2012, I was emancipated from foster care after eleven years in the system. My father has been incarcerated for fifteen years, and he will not be released from prison

until 2038. Now that I am grown up, I write to my dad and I do not let my feelings get hurt anymore.

Shame

When we had open house at school, kids would ask why my uncle would take me instead of my dad. I made up lies, saying that my dad was working. I was made fun of by other kids because I did not live with my parents. In the fourth grade, I lived with my aunt and for parent's night she would go to school for my cousins, but not for me. My cousins would get together the next day at school and ask me why my parents were not at parents' night. They knew because I lived with them, but I made up excuses. Then I went into another foster care home, and I was locked up in a room and could not come out even to use the wash room. I did not belong, and I got used to the fact that mom and dad were not coming back.

Conflict: Analysis

This co-researcher took time to express the symptoms and feelings she was experiencing by being left behind by her parents. For years, she has suffered physical and emotional abuse, and was mistreated by her own family members. This must have been devastating for her, as she did not have her parents and was mistreated by relatives and not accepted.

It also sounds as though her cousins were vicious, asking her where her parents were and making fun of her. I could understand how this child was depressed and turned to drugs. It seems like she was a target for her family to continuously abuse her. Since

she was seven years old, she was abandoned by her mother. Her life appears to have been an on-going rejection by family members and foster families.

I am glad that she found a way to help deal with anger and hurt feelings by writing letters to her mother, even though she never sent them. Writing was a mechanism that she utilized to vent and let out the stuff that had been accumulating inside of her for years. It is God who has kept her alive to achieve her dream of working in the medical field. It is amazing how she has pushed her way through college and an internship. She is now on her way to becoming a registered nurse. She has done all this without the aid of her parents, and without owning transportation to get to and from school.

I have been seeking scholarships to help her get a degree as a registered nurse. I have found many scholarships that are designated for children of incarcerated parents and foster children. I want to prevent her from having to use grants and having to pay back the government for her education. She has definitely overcome adversity, and needs to be commended for her accomplishments. I have written a good news story about her to inspire young people not to give up.

Mona's Story and the Gospel in Intervention

In times of family financial hardship, kids often fall through the cracks unless someone steps in to help. Community Outreach Ministry intervenes to help grandparents who are raising their grandchildren because of absentee parents. The ministry has recruited other local agencies to get involved in sending at-risk children to camp and mentoring. According to the "Private/Public Venture" study: "Youth are 27% less likely to start using alcohol, 46% less likely to start using drugs, and 50% less likely to skip

school. Through a partnership arrangement with a bicycling non-profit, a few of the children who received camp scholarships were also connected to year-round mentors after camp.’²

While at camp, the co-researcher was able to get stuff off of her chest, and she did not have to fake it. After the evening chapel, she would get alone with God and cried. I know God was working in her heart and spirit. Her grandfather ran a car wash that summer for Community Outreach Ministry, and this whole family made it possible for forty middle and high school youth to attend camp and have a mountain top experience.

Chapter Three—What Happened to the Caregivers as a Result of the Incarceration? Grandfather Caregiver, Age 56, Mexican—Challenges for the Caregivers

My experiences with my grandchildren are that the children need their mother and their father. Children need to have both of their parents to train the children how to get along as a family and to teach the children right from wrong. The children needed to know that they have to behave themselves and respect authority. Otherwise they will end up in the Juvenile Justice System or corrections and rehabilitation.

Financial Hardships

I have been unable to work due to a medical condition and my wife has had to go work the night shift. This is not our first choice, but we have had to sacrifice for our grandchildren to be involved in sports and extra-curricular activities. Since the grandchildren came to live with us, we did not receive any financial support from the

²Bonnie Terk, “Camp Outreach Benefits Local Young People, *Canyon Lake Friday Flyer*, September 5, 2008.

government, state, or county. Our grandchildren did receive medical benefits and a nominal allowance, but no child support from their parents. We loved and cared for our grandchildren and wanted to keep them safe and protected from following their parents footsteps into substance abuse and incarceration. My daughter was pregnant as a teen, dropped out of high school, abused alcohol, and was living in the streets. Her children went into child protective services, and in time our grandchildren were able to come and stay with us. We wanted to give our grandchildren opportunities to have a better life.

Social Challenges

The children needed to keep themselves busy and find new things to learn to distract themselves from getting involved with the wrong crowd. Mentors can help the children to be encouraged to have goals, and give them someone to look up to besides their grandmother and grandfather. Children of incarcerated parents need to be taught the right things to do. Even if it seems harder, they need to learn not to steal, break the law, or hurt anyone.

Spiritual Challenges

Churches should get the children involved in Bible studies so that they learn the word of God. Youth groups should keep the children active and offer fun activities like carnivals. Church people need to welcome these children into the family and lift them up spiritually so that they will want to excel. Church should be a place for the children to go and make new friends, sing, play games, and be happy.

Educational Challenges

Sports are good for the children to learn because it involves developing skills and discipline, and learning how to be a team player. Athletes take better care of their health because they need strength and energy to do well and to be competitive. Schools offer many kinds of sports programs, but not all families can afford to pay for the uniforms and equipment.

Analysis: Generational Deficits and Benefits

Children of incarcerated parents are victims of their parents' crimes. When the parents are in prison, the children suffer a loss through no fault of their own. In this child's life she was rejected and abandoned by her father. The father's mother also rejected her, and physically abused her. Her father's parents drank, but did not abuse alcohol and were never married. Her mother and father were never married either, both parents were high school drop-outs, and her mother was pregnant as a teen.

Thus, the generational deficits include: rejection, abandonment, physical abuse, alcohol and drug abuse, crime, incarceration, school dropout, teen pregnancy, no child support, poverty, oppression, and homelessness. The generational benefits are that the co-researcher's grandparents on her mother's side were Christians. The participant went to camp, heard the Gospel, and received Christ into her life. The adversity and hurt feelings have been overcome. She has become a second generation Christian, and a high school graduate. She is also a first generation college graduate and the first generation to work in the medical field. The co-researcher has not followed her parents' footsteps into incarceration.

Mona's Story and the Gospel in Liberation

In 2008, the co-researcher and her younger brother were recipients of Community Outreach Ministry camp scholarships. This was the participant's first time going to camp and having a mountain top experience. One factor that helped this participant change her life was her summer camp experience with Community Outreach Ministry. Camp made an impact on her life. She learned she was loved and cared for by people at camp. She met friends that she could relate to and she learned about God. Camp helped her to have victory over adversity.

Her camp experience gave her the foundation from God's word to finish high school with A's and B's. She was recognized for her accomplishments by being placed on the honor roll and by being crowned queen at her senior prom. On her 18th birthday, in December 2012, she was emancipated from the Foster Care System. In May 2013 she celebrated her high school graduation.

Even though her life took several different turns, her dream to work in the medical field has never wavered. She has successfully graduated from college, completed her internship, and is a medical assistant. Her next career goal is to become a registered nurse. She said, "I have a five year plan, but if it takes me a hundred years, I will accomplish my dream." Her personal goals are to have a happy marriage and children, and to spend quality time with her family. Her advice to others is: "Never give up, love yourself, and set a goal. Picture how you would like to live and do it."

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTION, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSION

Strategy for the Future

I plan to implement my project by developing a “Breaking the Cycle of Incarceration Children’s Collaborative,” and writing a book to address the problems affecting children of incarcerated parents, using interventions from my model and resource lists. The collaborative will consist of local, state and county legislators, and representatives from groups identified in my model. Furthermore, I will transition my academic project “Breaking the Cycle of Incarceration: Stories of My Work As A Missionary to Children of Incarcerated Parents,” into a popular culture book and rename it, “Breaking Cycles and New Beginnings.” The purpose of the book is to create an extension of my research experiences and to leave a legacy.

This book is being driven by my passion and excitement to stimulate action in others, and this synergy will be reflected in the book’s introduction. The first four chapters will show the common themes between the Biblical, historical, and theological foundations and the art of ministry. Chapters five through eleven are the six stories I have collected, analyzed and repackaged to give voice to the painful experiences that children have endured as hidden victims of crime and powerlessness. The book will conclude with the model and resource lists, empowering children to break the cycle of incarceration.

Steps Moving Forward

This collaborative will help equip children to compete in the twenty-first century environment and a global market place. The need is great and the time is now to give these children tools to be productive and competitive in education, technology and industry. Through my research, I have found scholarships that are targeted for the children whose parents were incarcerated, so that, starting in middle school, they can be propelled through post-secondary education with reduced debt. This resource list includes contacts and linkages for accessing applications for scholarships.

For those children who are eighteen, beyond high school, and lack direction, AMERICORPS and Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), are examples of people power through the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). These initiatives have been set up to embrace disconnected, low income young people and assist them to obtain employment, reduce underserved populations and transition them into financial literacy, and affordable housing. VISTA advocates economic, educational, and healthy future opportunities to increase individuals and families to help them reach their full potential.¹

Project Summary

In summarizing the project, I interviewed six families including fifteen family members in eight weeks. I researched three generations of family data and discovered the following deficits in order of severity: 1). oppression, 2). drugs, 3). poverty, crimes, non-

¹“Americorps VISTA”, webinar power point presentation, The Corporation for National and Community Service California State Office, Greg Eriksen, July 14, 2013.

payment of child support, 4). school dropout and divorce, 5). incarceration, 6). domestic violence and 7). teen-age pregnancy. Based upon this family data, it became evident that the informal arrangements that evolved between family members, outside of the foster care system and juvenile court system, have posed heavy financial hardships on the caregivers. Caregivers and children have wanted their family secrets to remain private and therefore have not asked for financial assistance. However, through utilizing my model and resource lists, caregivers in qualifying households in Riverside County can maintain their privacy and find financial support. This project can be replicated in other states by recording and analyzing children's stories, and utilizing the qualitative insights to develop interventions that penetrate cultures, races, borders and barriers, and give children everywhere a second chance to have a winning attitude and champion spirit.

APPENDIX A

VOLUNTARY INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Voluntary Informed Consent Form

United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio

Untold Stories of Adult Children of Incarcerated Parents (IRB Log IRB # _____)

As a part of my dissertation, I am conducting a study about children of incarcerated parents. I chose this topic because there is little literature that has been tracked regarding the experiences of the children of incarcerated parents. In addition, the adult inmate population is growing, and the number of children being left behind is multiplying across the country. Not knowing these children's stories prevents effective treatments and interventions, that would help break the cycle of incarceration in these children.

Background Information

The purpose of this research is to apprehend, document, and analyze multiple stories of both the researcher and those researched (including the adult children of incarcerated parents, the parents, and the caregivers). The analysis of the stories will provide data that will yield qualitative insights, which can inform suggestions for treatments and interventions.

Procedures

I will ask permission in advance from the parent(s) or caregiver(s) to speak with the children. If the parents, caregivers, and children agree to participate in this study, I will conduct a one-hour or less audio -taped interview per individual.

The questions will be open ended—you can just tell me your story. I will provide some guided questions, but you do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. You can also withdraw from the research at any time. The location dates and times of the interviews will be arranged at your convenience between November and December, 2013. The information will be destroyed not later than December 2014, or after the final report is written. Ownership of the data belongs to the researcher and will not be shared with others outside of this project. The researcher is not biased regarding sexual orientation, gender, religion, race, age, and disability.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Research

The risks in participating in this study may cause you to be inconvenienced, affected psychologically or socially, or stigmatized. Reflecting on your past experiences may cause sensitive issues to surface. In case you experience any difficulty, you may dial 211 and you will be given a referral.

There are benefits of participating in this study. It will enable you to dialogue, which allows you to tell and make meaning of your story. Reflecting on the past may bring

understanding and promote change, growth and resilience. These insights can inform suggestions for interventions and treatments relative to children's social, spiritual, and educational wellbeing in order to help reduce risk factors, difficulties, and breaking the cycle of incarceration. The new knowledge gained in this project will be added to the scholarly literature, and will help raise the level of awareness in order to make these children's needs visible to policymakers and funders.

Confidentiality

As the researcher, I must guarantee you that I have taken steps in advance to keep you and your family safe by keeping your names and locations anonymous and confidential in order to protect your privacy. Furthermore, only I will know the names of the participants who are being interviewed. During the audio-taped interview, you will use a pseudonym so that the person typing the manuscript will not know your real identity. I will bring you the manuscript to review in order to ensure that the information was transcribed correctly and truthfully and your meanings and perspectives were captured. Together, we can make sense of the data. I will label the themes and patterns with a code, and we can come up with interpretations.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

I invite you to participate as a volunteer in this study. You have been selected to participate because of your involvement with Community Outreach Ministry annual Christmas party, camping, and or mentoring programs. I will give you a copy of the final report. This final report will be shared to help improve the outcomes of children of incarcerated parents. I would appreciate you sharing your experiences about what it was like being a child of an incarcerated parent(s).

Contacts and Questions

My name is Mona Davies. You can reach me at Community Outreach Ministry by calling me at (951)-698-7650 or my advisor, Dr. Randy Grimes, at (937)-254-2036. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent to participate in the study. I agree to be audio-taped.

Signature of Study Participant

Date

Signature of Researcher

Date

APPENDIX B
POPULATION BY INDIVIDUAL

Population by Individual: Untold Stories of Adult Children of Incarcerated Parents**Name:** _____**Gender:** Male ☐ Female ☐**Ethnicity:** _____**Age:** _____**Religion:** _____**Highest grade completed in school:** _____**Type of work:** _____**Marital status:** Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐**Ages of children:** _____

APPENDIX C

STENOGRAPHER LETTER OF AGREEMENT

Letter of Agreement

Dear Mona Davies,

October 29, 2013

Re: Transcription Project relating to your Doctor of Ministry Degree at United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio.

This letter will confirm our understanding concerning the terms of retainer and nature of services to be performed for the Transcription Project relating to your Doctor of Ministry Degree at United Theological Seminary. The terms are as follows:

1. TERM. This agreement will be for the period from November 2013 to December 2013. Either of us may terminate this agreement with seven (7) days' written notice to the other party. In the event of termination, I will be compensated for services rendered through the date of termination.
2. DUTIES. As a certified shorthand reporter, licensed by the State of California, CSR No. 13585, my duties will include the following:
 - a. Transcribing audio-taped recording of interviews into manuscripts, of which the interview data is confidential to protect the privacy of the research participants.
 - b. Editing transcribed manuscript for proofreading/grammatical errors.
 - c. Having said manuscript proofread by professional proofreader.
 - d. Finalizing manuscript and electronically delivering it to you.
 - e. All of the above duties will be completed within (5) five days of receipt of audio file.
3. COMPENSATION. The compensation for my services, as agreed upon, shall be at the rate of \$50.00 an hour, with an estimated time investment of three (3) hours for each one(1)-hour recorded interview, of which you have estimated a total of 6 families' interviews. A pre-project retainer of \$200 has been received. The retainer will be credited to the completed project. However, if you wish to terminate my services and there is an unused remainder of the retainer, it will be credited back to you upon my termination. Each interview will be billed separately, as each one may vary in length and workload. However, the final invoice will be submitted once all 6 interviews have been transcribed, clearly delineating individual amounts. At that time, payment in full is expected.

Please sign and return as I have done. Accepted and agreed to:

 10/31/2013
 Megan Woodsum

x  10/31/2013
 Mona Davies

APPENDIX D

MODEL

Breaking the Cycle of Incarceration:

Stories Of My Work As A Missionary To Children Of Incarcerated Parents

Model



Grand Parents • Relatives • Parents

A. Grand Parents raising Grand Children
Support Group

B. Relatives raising Relatives
Support Group

C. Social Services
Financial Support

APPENDIX E

INCARCERATED PARENTS—FAMILIES 1 AND 3

Incarcerated Parents—Families 1 and 3

PROJECT PARTICIPANTS/STORIES	THEMES THAT EMERGED FROM STORIES (DATA)	QUALITATIVE (RESEARCH) INSIGHTS	PROGRAM APPLICATIONS (THE NEW MODEL)
Family 1. A Incarcerated Mother	Poor Choices	Hung out with wrong crowd. Using drugs and partying. Left her son with dad and walked away from being a mom.	Counseling Drug rehabilitation
Family 1. A Incarcerated Mother	Drugs	Committed white collar crime	Work Force Development and Reentry Program
Family 3. A Incarcerated Father	Poor Choices	Incarcerated parent became a gang member and was introduced to drugs. He hung out with the wrong crowd.	Counseling Drug Rehabilitation
Family 3. A Incarcerated Father	Drugs	Incarcerated parent was influenced to commit crimes, stealing, and fighting by gang. Incarcerated parent was locked up five plus times.	Work Force Development and Re-Reentry Plan

APPENDIX F

CHILDREN—FAMILIES 1 AND 2

Children—Families 1 and 2

PROJECT PARTICIPANTS/STORIES	THEMES THAT EMERGED FROM STORIES (DATA)	QUALITATIVE (RESEARCH) INSIGHTS	PROGRAM APPLICATIONS (THE NEW MODEL)
Family 1. C Children	Absentee Parents	Children saw mom arrested. Experienced trauma and uncertainty. Did not know when mom would be back.	Counseling Mentoring
Family 1. C Children	Shame	Angry, abandoned, guilty, insecure, and embarrassed.	Values Clarification Bible
Family 2. C Children	Absentee Parents	Took on father figure. Stressed out about money, food, survival and issues with relatives. Child's mind wandered. Child felt limited and defeated.	Counseling Mentoring
Family 2. C Children	Shame	Being asked threatening questions was torture. Lived in fear. Could not read or do math. Stigmatized in school.	Values Clarification Tutoring Bible

APPENDIX G
CHILDREN—FAMILIES 3 AND 4

Children—Families 3 and 4

PROJECT PARTICIPANTS/STORIES	THEMES THAT EMERGED FROM STORIES (DATA)	QUALITATIVE (RESEARCH) INSIGHTS	PROGRAM APPLICATIONS (THE NEW MODEL)
Family 3. C Children	Absentee Parents	Unloved Loneliness Emptiness	Values Clarification Bible Counseling
Family 3. C Children	Shame	Tried to hide his shame.	Mentoring
Family 4. C Children	Absentee Parents	Could not learn in school from teachers.	Tutoring Bible

APPENDIX H
CHILDREN—FAMILIES 5 AND 6

Children—Families 5 and 6

PROJECT PARTICIPANTS/STORIES	THEMES THAT EMERGED FROM STORIES (DATA)	QUALITATIVE (RESEARCH) INSIGHTS	PROGRAM APPLICATIONS (THE NEW MODEL)
Family 5. C Children	Absentee Parents	Angry, fighter and disruptive in school. Not educationally prepared to be accepted into first grade.	Counseling Mentoring Tutoring
Family 5. C Children	Shame	Both parents incarcerated. Felt abandoned.	Bible Values Clarification
Family 6. C Children	Absentee Parents	Dad was incarcerated all her life. Mom was an alcoholic and she abandoned her children. Never felt the love of a family. Depressed, a runaway and attempted suicide.	Counseling Bible Values Clarification
Family 6. C Children	Shame	Teased by family for not having parents. Abused in foster care.	Counseling and Mentoring

APPENDIX I
CAREGIVERS—FAMILIES 1 AND 2

Caregivers—Families 1 and 2

PROJECT PARTICIPANTS/STORIES	THEMES THAT EMERGED FROM STORIES (DATA)	QUALITATIVE (RESEARCH) INSIGHTS	PROGRAM APPLICATIONS (THE NEW MODEL)
Family 1. B Caregivers	Challenges for the Caregivers	Confusion and embarrassment. Needed Caregivers Support System. Felt like failures.	Grandparents Raising Grand Children Support Group Riverside County Office on Aging
Family 1. B Caregivers	Financial Hardships	No weekly paychecks. No finances came in for raising our grandchildren for: housing, food, clothing, schooling, sports, tutoring, mentoring, extra-curricular activities.	Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) provides resources and or financial support for eligible caregivers and children of incarcerated parents
Family 2. B Caregivers	Challenges for the Caregivers	Victim of domestic violence. Teen pregnancy, and school dropout. Homeless below poverty line. Needed to do a better job of being a mother.	Grandparents raising grandchildren support Riverside County Office on Aging
Family 2. B Caregivers	Financial Hardships	Housing, Cal Fresh-food stamps. Medi-Cal Health Insurance.	Parents Financial Support (DPSS)

APPENDIX J
CAREGIVERS—FAMILIES 3 AND 4

Caregivers—Families 3 and 4

PROJECT PARTICIPANTS/STORIES	THEMES THAT EMERGED FROM STORIES (DATA)	QUALITATIVE (RESEARCH) INSIGHTS	PROGRAM APPLICATIONS (THE NEW MODEL)
Family 3. B Caregivers	Challenges of the Caregivers	Family would have been homeless if the grandfather had not supported his daughter and her children with a place to live, food to eat, and sports for his grandson.	Parent qualified for Social Services through (DPSS). Riverside County Office of Aging
Family 3. B Caregivers	Financial Hardships	After the grandfather died the family went on welfare.	Parent qualified for Financial Support through (DPSS).
Family 4. B Caregivers	Challenges of the Caregivers	Parent had to be a mom and a dad at the same time. Parent had to teach children to go to school, not to hang out with wrong crowd, not to steal and fight. Child was caught in school with a blade.	Parent qualified for Social Services through (DPSS). Riverside County Office of Aging
Family 4. B Caregivers	Financial Hardships	Limited. Lived with children in a one room with bath below poverty line.	Parent qualified for Financial Support through (DPSS).

APPENDIX K
CAREGIVERS—FAMILIES 5 AND 6

Caregivers—Families 5 and 6

PROJECT PARTICIPANTS/STORIES	THEMES THAT EMERGED FROM STORIES (DATA)	QUALITATIVE (RESEARCH) INSIGHTS	PROGRAM APPLICATIONS (THE NEW MODEL)
Family 5. B Caregivers	Challenges of the Caregivers	Children fought in school. Behind in school. Neighbors complained of noise. Great aunt was threatened to be evicted.	Relatives Raising Relatives Support Group Riverside Office of Aging.
Family 5. B Caregivers	Financial Hardships	Below poverty line with five people living in one bedroom. Great uncle was disabled. No checks or financial support came in for the grand nephews.	Relatives Raising Relatives Riverside Office of Aging.
Family 6. B Caregivers	Challenges of the Caregivers	Grandfather was disabled and it was a struggle raising his grandchildren. Grandchildren needed their mother and father to be a family to prevent the children from going into the juvenile and/or prison system.	Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Group Riverside Office of Aging.
Family 6. B Caregivers	Financial Hardships	Grandmother went to work on the night shift.	Financial support available for eligible grandparents.

APPENDIX L

INCARCERATED PARENTS RESOURCE LIST

Incarcerated Parents Resource List

Themes: Poor Choices and Drugs

Poor Choices

1. Prison Fellowship-transforming lives and transforming communities through reentry programs offered inside prisons.
<https://www.prisonfellowship.org/programs/reentry/>
 Resources for Recovery
 - How to Plan for a Successful Reentry
 - Keeping Ex-offenders Free
 - When Prisoners Return

2. Friends Outside- services in California, Advocacy and worldwide.
<http://www.friendsoutside.org/>
 Resources for Recovery
 - Parenting Education While the Parent is Incarcerated
 - Programs for Reunification with Supportive Family, Individuals and Pro-social Support System.
 - Employment
 - Spiritual Awareness, Courage to Change

3. Center Force- Mission is to support, educate and advocate for individuals, families, and communities impacted by incarceration. <http://www.centerforce.org/>
 Resources
 - Promotes Successful Reentry
 - Helps to Reduce the Risk of Re-incarceration.

4. Inmate Aid-information nationwide for inmates and the people who love them.
<http://www.inmateaid.com/>

Resources Services, Aid Before Going in, While There and After Release.

5. ASK Mentoring Outreach, Inc. - A prison ministry reclaiming one life at a time. One-on-one visitation with prisoner who have requested a friend because they receive few or no visits from the outside. Ex-offenders are encouraged through a caring relationship to become productive and useful citizens resulting in a life changed decisions for the future. P.O. Box 1915 Chino Hills, CA. 91709-0064
pam@askmentoring.org www.askmentoring.org/contact.html

6. Directory of Programs Serving families of Adult Offenders, pages 2-5
<https://s3.amazonaws.com/static.nicic.gov/Library/014779.pdf>

Drugs

1. Addiction Hot Line 855-893-7973
2. Prison Ministry Releases and Resources on Addiction, Crossroad Bible Institute, Billy Graham. <http://cbi.fm/press-release/prison-ministry-releases-resources-on-addiction/>
3. My Family Incorporated Recovery Center- comprehensive substance abuse recovery and behavioral health services to help individuals and families achieve and maintain a healthy and productive lifestyle. 25186 Hancock Avenue Suite #100, Murrieta, CA 92563 951-698-8558 <http://treatment-facilities.findthebest.com/l/14671/MFI-Recovery-Center-Detoxification>, residential, outpatient, spiritual rehabilitation, 12 Step program, drug and alcohol rehabilitation treatment.
4. Riverside Recovery Resources-Rebuilding people lives, adolescent and family drug and alcohol program. Dedicated to the mission of building stronger families and communities by providing:
 - Drug and Alcohol Prevention,
 - Intervention, Education, Rehabilitation

Riverside Recovery Resources, 600 3rd Street, Lake Elsinore, CA 951-674-5354

Riverside Recovery Resources, 3757 Elizabeth Street, Riverside, CA 92506
 951-684-3744

Riverside Recovery Resources, 2055 North Perris Blvd. Perris, CA 92570
 951-940-6061 www.riversiderecovery.org/

5. Project Helping Incarcerated Parents (HIP) is especially for parents who have been on drugs and are incarcerated. The project is for prisoners building parenting skills on the inside, a corrections based parenting program.

<http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/helpkids/rcpdfs/hip.pdf>

First the parent goes through two classes for eight weeks each.

- Then the inmate participates in a support group to learn self-esteem, stress reduction, communications, child development, separation and divorce, and family traditions.
- Next the child is brought inside the walls of the prison for monthly workshops with their parent for one Saturday a month for three hours to engage with their parent reading books, creative arts, games and toys.
- Twice a year is a celebration with the family as in a carnival.

APPENDIX M
CHILDREN’S RESOURCE LIST

Children's Resource List

Themes: Absentee Parents and Shame

Absentee Parents

1. California Family Life Center- Planet Youth- A Riverside County Youth Opportunity Center for youth ages 16-21 to dream, discover and celebrate. Helps youth to develop basic skills competency in education. Explores post-secondary education, tutoring, CASHEE tutoring, life skills classes. Leadership development, work readiness skills, certificate programs in Microsoft Office, Auto Technology, Introduction to Medical Careers, Keyboarding and work etiquette. Work Experience and career exploration. Paid and unpaid, job retention, job shadowing, career assessment and planning, occupational skills training.
Hours: Monday – Thursday 8:00 A.M. – 6:00 P.M. Friday 8:00 A.M.-5:00 P.M.
400 W. Graham Avenue, Lake Elsinore, CA 92530 951-471-8415,
www.cflckids.org

2. Angel Tree-referral services for local churches to adopt children and engage them in Christmas gifts, camping and mentoring programs. Offers resources for children and families of the incarcerated.
<http://www.prisonfellowship.org/resources/prisoners-families-friends/resources-for-families-friends/>
 - Confident Kids – Support groups for children and families
 - Kids Like Me – Support groups for children and families
 - Life Hurts God Heals – Teen support groups
 - Life Skills for inmates families and education support

3. Community Outreach Ministry, adopting children of incarcerated parents to receive Christmas gifts and camp scholarships 951-698-7650
www.communityoutreachministry.org
 - Giving at-risk kids a second chance to be winners and champions

4. Girl Scouts Beyond Bars- incarcerated mothers, empowered daughters and a better future for all.
www.girlscouts.org/who_we_are/our_partners/initiatives/pdf/gb_beyond_bars_a_better_future_for_all.pdf

Southwest Locations:

Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles Los Angeles, CA 90017-4621

213-213-0150 communications@girlscoutsla.org, www.girlscoutsla.org

Girl Scouts of San Geronimo Council Redlands, CA 92374-4533
909-307-6555 meklund@gssgc.org, www.gssgc.org

5. Inmate Aid-services for the entire family. Lists resources for accessing mentors for children of incarcerated parents. www.inmateaid.com/family-services

Counseling - Shame

1. Victor Community Support Services for individuals and families, 0-21 years of age. Individual and family therapy, parenting support, clinical assessment and medication support services. Eligibility: Children under 21 years old with full-scope of Medi-Cal benefits.
2. Novell/Novell - Counseling, Marriage, individual and family therapy, and anger management. Cash, private insurance and full scope Medi-Cal accepted. 29748 Rancho California Road, Temecula, CA 92590 951-694-0695.
3. Safe Alternatives For Everyone (SAFE), Temecula Community Center, 28910 Pujol Street, Temecula, CA 92590 951-587-3900 Case management, teen connection, anger management, in home services, basic needs assistance and Police Athletic League (PAL).

PAL: is a youth violence prevention and intervention program that provides educational and recreational activities for youth ages 5 to 17 accompanied by volunteer law enforcement officers. The collaboration with Murrieta and Temecula Police Departments is founded on the belief that early prevention and intervention for youth will reduce juvenile crime and violence.

Safe Alternatives for Everyone accepts sign-ups year round for the Temecula/Murrieta Police Activities League. The annual fee for Police Activities League membership is \$30 which includes a Police Activities League shirt. Fees are negotiable and no one is turned away for inability to pay.
www.safefamiliesca.org/police-activities-league/

4. Alternatives to Domestic Violence - Provides crisis intervention, counseling, ongoing victim support and referrals. P. O. Box 910, Riverside, CA 92502 951-320-1381, 24 hour crisis line 951-683-0829, info@adv-besafe.org
5. Open Doors, Community support group for families and caregivers raising children with mental, emotional and or behavior problems. 951-358-3622

Program is active. Contact: Alicia Arredondo 951 943-1130 mhweb@rcmhd.org
 Murrieta Location: 24300 Las Brisas RD North, Room 3 Murrieta, CA 92562.
 Meets 2nd Wednesday of each month 3:30-5:30 P.M.

Website:

http://riverside.networkofcare.org/mh/services/agency.aspx?pid=OpenDoorsParentCaregiverSupportGroup_349_2_0

6. Ok2talk.org for teen and young adults struggling with mental health problems.
1-800-273-TALK
7. Neighborhood Health Care- Elizabeth Nieto Outreach Enrollment Specialist
41840 Enterprise Circle N., Temecula, CA 92590. Office 951-225-6477
Direct 760-828-1241 Elizabethn@nhcare.org, www.nhcare.org

Clothes for Children

1. Operation School Bell- Assistance League of Temecula Valley
Accepts referrals from Temecula, Murrieta, Menifee and Lake Elsinore School District clerks.
 - Provides vouchers for needy children to go shopping for brand new clothes. Enhances children's self-esteem, promote learning and encourage regular school attendance.
 - Back packs or duffle bags with immediate personal hygiene and a change of clothes.
 28720 Via Montezuma, Temecula, CA 92590-2510 951-698-8018
<http://temeculavalley.assistanceleague.org/ps.projects.cfm?ID=822>
2. Salvation Army
 Provides vouchers for needy children to go shopping for brand new clothes.
 40270 Los Alamos Road. Murrieta, CA 92562 951-677-1324.
www.google.com/?gws_rd=ssl#q=salvation+army+murrieta+california

After School Programs Social, Spiritual and Educational

Awana Clubs in local churches www.awana.org/churches-and-organizations Southern California website: www.awanacgw.org/index.php
 Riverside contact: Don and Debi Isaacs 909-881-1225 DonI@Awana.org

General guide to the age group:

Puggles: 2 year olds (or the year before Cubbies)

Cubbies: 3 & 4 year olds (or the 2 years before Sparks).

Sparks: K - 2nd grade.

T&T: 3rd - 5th or 6th grade (churches can choose either a 3 or 4 year T&T group).

Trek: 6th - 8th grade (depends on the T&T choice the church made).

Journey: 9th - 12th grade

Awana Location Finder: www.awana.org/club-finder/search?zip=92562

Gateway Church of the Nazarene: <http://www.gatewaynaz.com/>
23560 Jefferson Ave, Murrieta, CA 92562-2151 951-461-0221

Lake Hills Community Church: <http://www.lhccelsinore.com/Welcome.html>
18119 Grand Ave, Lake Elsinore, CA 92530-6161 951-678-2514

Victory Life Christian Fellowship: <http://victorylifetemecula.com/>
41823 Enterprise Circle N Ste 100, Temecula, CA 92590-5682 714-319-4047

Mountain View Community Church: <https://mtvcc.org/>
26201 Ynez Rd Ste 104, Temecula, CA 92591-6048 951-693-0771

First Baptist Church of Menifee: www.menifeevchurch.org/
33220 Sweetwater Canyon Rd, Menifee, CA 92584-9079 951-672-7287

Canyon Lake Community Church: <http://www.canyonlakechurch.org/>
30515 Railroad Canyon Rd, Canyon Lake, CA 92587-9227 951-244-1877

Rancho Baptist Church: www.ranchochristianchurch.org/
29775 Santiago Rd, Temecula, CA 92592-3055 951-676-2911

Royal Rangers: Grades K-12 <http://royalrangers.com/>

Crossroads Church of the Assemblies of God
26090 Ynez Rd. Ste A, Temecula, CA 9259 951-695-1123
Grades: K-5th meets on Wednesdays at 7PM
www.gotocrossroads.com/temecula/kids/royal-rangers/

His Light on the Hill Assembly of God Sun City
28125 Bradley RD STE 180, Menifee, CA 92586 951-679-4667
Grades K- 12th, meets Wednesday at 7PM
www.hislightonthehill.com/boys.html

Vida Nueva Asamblea de Dios
23510 Clayton St, Perris, CA 92570 909-657-1503

Victory in Christ Faith Center
1015 N. Ramona BLVD, San Jacinto, CA 92582

Centro Cristiano Sinai Assembly of God
12880 Heacock St, Moreno Valley, CA 92553 951-656-6940

Templo Nueva Vida
930 E. Ontario Ave, Corona, CA 92881 951-734-4228
<http://serviciosuniweb.com/tnv/tnv-principal.htm>

Missionettes in local churches: per Tere Goblirsch (SoCal Girls Ministries Team Leader)
626-533-8303. terewithane@earthlink.net

The organization does not have a list churches that host Missionettes.

Child Evangelism Clubs in public schools: www.cefonline.com/

CEF of Greater Riverside P.O. Box 584 Corona, CA 92878-0524
Contact: Dan Dunkerley 714-423-1385 danthekidoman@yahoo.com

CEF of Greater San Bernardino 35148 San Carlos St Yucaipa, CA 92399
Contact: Andy Simpson 909-446-1325 andy-val@juno.com

CEF of Hemet San Jacinto 41696 Mayberry Ave Hemet, CA 92544
Contact: Mr. Terry Phillips 951-658-3892 teppap@verizon.com

CEF of Inland Valley 30650 Rancho California Rd., Ste 406 Temecula, CA 92591
Contact: Lynn Cole 951-234-4154 goodnewsclubsinlandvalley@yahoo.com

Truth Chasers Club:
www.cefonline.com/index.php?Itemid=100052&id=16&option=com_content&view=category

Good News Club: www.cefonline.com/index.php?Itemid=100049

Salvation Army, Murrieta

Vacation Bible school: The Summer day Camp runs for 5 weeks runs from the end of June through July. Ages 5-11. Troops programs run in August. This includes: Sunbeams (grades 1-5), Girlguards (6-12), Adventure Corps and Explorers (grades 1-4).

Contact Lisa Folden 951-677-1324 ext is 20, www.murietasalvationarmy.org/

Temecula: Store/Donation trailer: 27525 Jefferson Ave, Temecula, CA 92590
951-693-9615

*No locations: Winchester, Lake Elsinore, Menifee

YMCA, Riverside

YMCA of Riverside City & County: 4020 Jefferson St, Riverside, CA 92504
951-689-9622 ymca.net

Jurupa Family YMCA: 9254 Galena St, Riverside, CA 92509
951-685-5241 ymca.net

*No locations in Lake Elsinore, Menifee, Temecula, Murrieta, or Winchester

After School Programs Social and Educational

Boys and Girls Clubs

Temecula: (Pechanga) 31465 Via Cordoba, Temecula, CA 92592
951-695-0181 www.bgcswc.org/great-oak-clubhouse/

Murrieta: 40550 California Oaks Rd., Murrieta, CA 92562 951-698-3838
www.bgcswc.org/murrieta-clubhouse/

Lake Elsinore: 3711 Nichols Rd, Lake Elsinore, CA 92530 951-245-4499
<http://www.bgcswc.org/alberhill-ranch-clubhouse/>

Boy Scouts of America

Temecula: Di Leo Hall, Saint Catherine of Alexandria Catholic Church
41875 "C" Street, Temecula CA 92592 Scoutmaster Ken R. ken767@aol.com
www.boy scouttroop148.com/

Murrieta: Murrieta Equestrian Center, 42670 Juniper Street, Murrieta, CA 92562
Scoutmaster Derrick Hiten Scouts@van4homes.com www.troop318.com/

Wildomar: Mountain View Community Church, 33122 Grape St., Wildomar
Scoutmaster Ed Wolfslau thetooltroll@aol.com <http://bsa604.mytroop.us/>

Lake Elsinore: Machado Park in the Summer Months, and at Machado
Elementary School during the school year. www.facebook.com/BSA430/info

Canyon Lake: Jason Kaiser 951-245-1866 www.canyonlakehomes.com/why-canyon-lake/clubs/boy-scouts-in-canyon-lake/

Menifee: scoutmaster@troop444.com www.troop444.com/

Girl Scouts of America

San Geronio Council (IE area) <http://girlscoutssangorgonio.org/>
1751 Plum Lane, Redlands, CA 92374 909-307-6555

Temecula/Murrieta/Menifee: Marlene Jimenez at the Southwest Service Center
 951-813-3355 mjimenenz@gssgc.org
www.scoutlander.com/publicsite/unithome.aspx?UID=22688

Canyon Lake: Andrea Barsby 951-244-2004 www.canyonlakehomes.com/why-canyon-lake/clubs/girl-scouts/

4 H Clubs

Main state office: <http://4h.ucanr.edu>
 ANR California State 4-H Office
 2801 Second Street, Davis, CA 95618
 530-750-1334

County Office: <http://ceriverside.ucanr.edu/>
 21150 Box Springs Road, Ste 202, Moreno Valley, CA 92557
 951-683-6491

Locations:

Riverside: 21150 Box Springs Road, Ste 202, Moreno Valley, CA 92557
 951-683-6491 <http://ceriverside.ucanr.edu/>

Community Centers/Park Districts

Temecula: Recreation Center 30875 Rancho Vista RD, Temecula, CA 92592
 951-694-6410
www.cityoftemecula.org/Temecula/Residents/ParksFacilities/CRC/CRC.htm

Murrieta: Community Center 41810 Juniper St, Murrieta, CA 92562
 Lea Kolek 951-304-7275 www.murrieta.org/services/cs/

Wildomar: 23873 Clinton Keith Rd., Suite 201, Wildomar, CA 92595
 951-677-7751 Janet Morales jmorales@cityofwildomar.org
www.cityofwildomarparcs.org/#!/parks/cjg9

Lake Elsinore: 310 W. Graham Ave, Lake Elsinore, CA 92530 951-245-0442
www.lake-elsinore.org/index.aspx?page=199

Canyon Lake: info@canyonlakesocal.com, <http://canyonlakesocal.com/parks/>

Menifee: 901 W. Esplanade Ave. PO Box 907 San Jacinto, CA 92581
districtoffice@vwrpd.org 951-654.1505 www.vwrpd.org/menifee-park.cfm

Winchester: 901 W. Esplanade Ave. PO Box 907 San Jacinto, CA 92581
 951-654-1505 www.vwrpd.org/winchester-park.cfm

Tutoring

1. Temecula Valley Library System, Temecula, CA 92590,
www.temeculalibrary.org/kids/homework
2. Planet Youth, 400 W. Graham Avenue, Lake Elsinore, CA 92530 951-471-8415,
www.cflckids.org
3. Freedom Crest Elementary School (G R E A T) Grandparents and graduates reading and enriching tutoring program. 29282 Menifee Road, Menifee, CA 92584 951-679-5285 ext. 2119, menifeeusd.org
4. Oasis Perris Youth Center – Educates and trains youth in workforce development. 351 Wilkerson Avenue Suite F, Perris, CA 92570 951-657-7105.
www.rivcowib.org/JobSeeker/Youth/PerrisTheOASIS/tabid/89/Default.aspx
5. YMCA Project L.E.A.D. Linking education, Advocacy and Development, 4020 Jefferson Street, Riverside, CA 92054 951-689-9622, riversideymca.org
6. Volunteer Center of Riverside, Provides Teen Education Mentoring Options, P O Box 5376, Riverside, CA 92054 951-686-3752 ext. 116 volunteercenter.org
7. www.homeworkhelp.com/
8. www.riversideca.gov/library/kids_homework.asp

Mentoring

Mentoring Organizations in Riverside County for children and youth.
www.rcmentor.org/collaborativemembers.html

1. Kids R Special Mentoring Program 107 North Townsend, Lake Elsinore, CA 92530 951-471-5026 after school one on one mentoring program.
ottisloveyou@verizon.net
2. Path of Life Ministries, Kids of Promise, mentoring children of incarcerated parents to make positive life choices. Rescue, Restore, and Rebuild. 3340 Durahart Street, Riverside, CA 92507 polministries.net 951-657-7105

3. Life Changing Mentoring Program, helping children of incarcerated parents to overcome adversity through reclaiming a generation. Includes sports, recreational arts, educational resources, and gang diversion, and family and youth advocacy and referral services. 1801 East D Street, Ontario, CA 91764 909-986-4771, <http://reclaimingageneration.org/index.php?nid=95818&s=gl>
4. Christian Mentors – Provides trained and equipped mentors to families in need of role models for their children. Meets one-on-one in public locations children 6 – 18 years of age. christianmentors.org, 30269 Calle Belcanto, Menifee, CA 92584 951-926-0856.
5. Nu View Mentor Program for first through fifth graders. 29780 Lake View Avenue, Nuevo, CA 92567 951-928-1302 nuview.k12.ca.us.
6. Pave the way Mentoring Program – Corona Police Department – Supports at-risk youth to benefit from positive role models. 152 E. 6th Street, Corona, CA 92879 951-279-3542, lompred@ci.corona.ca.us.
7. Olive Crest Mentoring Program–Serving at-risk families and children birth to twenty-two years of age. 3050 Chicago Avenue #180, Riverside, CA 92507 951-686-8500 ext.1415 olivecrest.org
8. Big Brothers Big Sisters, San Diego www.google.com/?gws_rd=ssl#q=big+brothers+big+sisters+of+san+diego
9. Big Brothers Big Sisters, Inland Empire: 8880 Benson Avenue, Montclair, CA 91763 909-763-5959 www.bigbroie.org/
10. Pathway Project, Helping people find a new beginning, Cameron Lemons 951-218-4732 fathercameron@gmail.com

Explorer Educational Programs

Border Patrol Explorers, Murrieta, CA

Program is state wide and runs all year long. Explorer Program offers opportunities in character building, good citizenship, and fitness for young men and women ages 14 through 21. Law Enforcement Explorer posts offer programs in law enforcement and criminal justice, which provide Explorers with practical training and hands-on experience in those areas.

The BP Law Enforcement Explorer Program provides opportunities for Explorers to participate in federal enforcement-related activities within the BP. BP has posts both at ports of entry and at Border Patrol sectors.

Training: When accepted into the program, an Explorer will receive extensive training and on the job experience to help prepare them for a career in Law Enforcement.

Explorers are able to: Assist with passenger processing and crowd control at airports and seaports, observe and assist with surveillance operations, observe vessel searches, take field trips, attend the Law Enforcement Explorer Conference, and participate in other Explorers Programs.

Contact: Michelle Lane michelle.lane@cbp.dhs.gov 202-863-6265

Application: www.cbp.gov/careers/outreach-programs/youth/explorer-program

Fire Department Explorers, Murrieta, CA

Murrieta Fire Department brings explorers in once a year, in June. Program is for young men and women who are 14 (and have completed the eighth grade) or 15 to 20 years old. Young people transitioning into adulthood are selected by the participating organization for involvement in the program. Color, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic background, economic status, or citizenship is not criteria for participation.

The purpose of the explorer program is to provide experiences to help young people mature and to prepare them to become responsible and caring adults. Explorers are ready to investigate the meaning of interdependence in their personal relationships and communities.

The Murrieta Fire Department has teamed up with Learning for Life to provide the young men and woman in the area a chance to learn firsthand about the fire service.

Program Goals: Teach explorers about fire service, help with career path, teach respect to self and others, create good citizenship, and leadership.

Without a good career path, it is almost impossible to get a job in the fire service. Explorers learn about background investigations, oral interview, classes needed, and the order in which to take them.

Address: Fire Station 1-41825 Juniper St, Murrieta, CA 92562

Contact: Captain Richard Curran 951-304-3473 rcurran@murrieta.org

Interest Form: www.murrieta.org/services/fire/events/explorer.asp

California Highway Patrol Explorers, Temecula, CA (Riverside office):

For the Inland Empire, the Explorer program takes place at the Riverside office. There is not a start/stop time. They take applications throughout the year. Ages 15-21. The Explorers meet each and every Wednesday from 5:30 P.M. to 9:15 P.M. at Ben Clark Training Center (in the city of Riverside near Van Buren Blvd and the I-215 freeway).

The Explorers are very active in the community and usually have at least 2-3 events each month. Explorers are expected to be on time at every meeting and participate in as many events as possible. Once accepted into the Explorer program, new post members are required to attend three Academy levels within the first 18 months. These Academies will train the explorers in many different aspects of law enforcement to make them better equipped for working with officers in the field. Explorer Post members will learn radio codes, patrol vehicle operation, traffic control, and a number of other subjects geared toward preparing them mentally and physically for the anticipation of becoming a cadet at the CHP Academy.

CHP Explorer Page: www.chp.ca.gov/recruiting/explorers.html

Riverside CHP Explorer: www.chp.ca.gov/recruiting/explorers_riverside.html

Address: 8118 Lincoln Ave, Riverside, CA 92504

Contact: Jason P. Cortenbach 951-637-8000 ext. 840 explorerpost@gmail.com

Application: www.chp.ca.gov/recruiting/explorer_forms.html

Police Explorers, Murrieta, CA

Per Sergeant Underwood- the program is under its formative stages and will eventually be year round. The Murrieta Police Explorer's Program is open to young men and women ages 14 (and who have completed the 8th grade) and not yet 21 years old with an interest in learning more about careers in the field of Law Enforcement.

Law Enforcement Exploring provides educational training programs for young adults on the purposes, mission, and objectives of law enforcement. The program provides career orientation experiences, leadership opportunities, and community service activities. The primary goals of the program are to help young adults choose a career path within law enforcement and to challenge them to become responsible citizens of their communities and the nation.

Law Enforcement Exploring combines some classroom training with ride-alongs in police vehicles, pistol shooting, community policing and much more.

Explorers develop: Leadership skills, respect for Police Officers and Explorers and learn new personal skills, marksmanship, and Law Enforcement protocols.

Explorers learn: Accident scene procedures, bomb threat response, and proper equipment usage.

Explorers have an opportunity to participate in: Ride-alongs, national events & competitions, community service.

Address: Murrieta Police Department 2 Town Square, Murrieta, CA 92562

Contact: Sergeant Daryl Underwood dunderwood@murrieta.org

Application: www.murrieta.org/documents/ExplorerProgramApplication.pdf

Sheriff Station Explorers, Lake Elsinore, CA

There is no set start or stop time for applicants. Law Enforcement Career Exploring is open to young men and women ages 14 (and completed the 8th grade) and not yet 21 years old with an interest in learning more about careers in the field of Law Enforcement.

Law Enforcement Exploring provides educational training programs for young adults on the purposes, mission, and objectives of law enforcement. The program provides career orientation experiences, leadership opportunities, and community service activities. The primary goals of the program are to help young adults choose a career path within law enforcement and to challenge them to become responsible citizens of their communities and the nation.

Explorers develop: Leadership Skills, respect for police officers and explorers, new personal skills, marksmanship and Law Enforcement Protocols.

Address: 333 Limited Ave, Lake Elsinore, CA 92530

Contact: Captain Leonard Hollingsworth 951-245-3300

Program Information & application: <http://exploring.learningforlife.org/services/career-exploring/law-enforcement/>

United States Forestry Explorers, Murrieta, CA

Program start date is normally the last week of July. The Fire Explorer Program benefits youth in the following ways: The opportunity to learn teamwork, leadership skills, hard work, receive community service hours, and compete in activities such as Fire Explorer Musters.

Overview: The Murrieta Fire Explorer Program is a youth program organized under the Boy Scouts of America. The program is designed to allow male and female youth, between the ages of 14 and 20, to explore a career in the fire service.

The explorers receive training similar to volunteer and professional firefighters, including basic fire chemistry, hose evolutions, ladder operations, medical and CPR training, hazardous materials, and auto extrication. The training program is intense and demanding, however the rewards increase character and the understanding of what it takes to pursue a career in the fire service.

General Information: Basic Requirements for joining the Fire Explorers are: Between 14 and 20 years old, completion of the 8th grade, 2.0 or better grade point average.

Address: 41825 Juniper St., Murrieta CA 92562

Contact: 951-970-6857

Application: www.murrietafireexplorers.org/contact-us/explorer-interest-card

Camping Social, Spiritual and Educational

Pinecrest Camp, Assembly of God, Pinecrest, CA

Green Valley-Calvary Chapel Church Murrieta, CA

Idyllwild Pines-Calvary Chapel Church Murrieta, CA

Calicinto Camp-Angel Tree, San Jacinto, CA

Salvation Army:

Camp is located in Big Bear. 700 Wren Drive, Big Bear Lake, CA 92315 909-878-0140
Camp runs from mid-June to the end of July. www.pinesummit.com/

Sa-Ha-Le Lodge, Big Bear Lake, CA

Scholarships for Jr. High, Colleges and Universities

1. Martin Luther King, Jr. High Scholarship Fund
<http://clubhouseatmountbaker.org/mlk-jr-scholarship-fund.html>
2. The Jack Kent Cook Foundation's Scholarships for Jr. High through post graduate studies. www.jkcf.org/scholarship-programs/

3. Creative Corrections Education Foundation—Providing scholarships to children of those who are or have been in prison can stem the pattern of repeat behavior from parent to child and assure a better tomorrow for these students and our communities. <http://creativecorrectionseducationfoundation.org/>
4. Ava's Grace Scholarship Foundation Mission is to break the cycle of incarceration through the gift of education. avasgrace.org
5. American Dream Scholarships, www.ehow.com/how_5385697_apply-mae-american-dream-scholarship.html
6. California College Pathways – Supporting opportunity and success for foster youth scholars. www.cacollegepathways.org/
7. College and the Children of the Incarcerated
<http://nrccfi.camden.rutgers.edu/2014/06/16/college-and-children-of-the-incarcerated-2/>
8. San Diego State University, Guardian Scholars
<https://students.ucsd.edu/finances/financial-aid/types/scholarships/guardian.html>
9. California Chafee Grant for Foster Youth, free money for foster youth for college or career training. www.chafee.csac.ca.gov/default.aspx
10. Get help paying for college. Need-based financial aid for children of incarcerated parents and low income families. <https://fafsa.ed.gov/>
11. Unmet Scholarship Program from Sallie Mae Fund
www.scholarshipscollege.com/unmet-need-scholarship-program-from-sallie-mae-fund/
12. Scholarships for underrepresented groups
www.google.com/edu/students/scholarships.html
13. Gates Millennium Scholars must have 3.3 Grade Point Average and nominated by a teacher or administrator and fill out the Federal Pell Grant. Eligibility is a prerequisite. <http://gmshp.org/>

14. Elks Lodge: Most Valuable Student Competition. Any high school senior who is a citizen of the United States is eligible to apply. Applicants need not be related to a member of the Elks. College students are not eligible to apply. Applicants must be citizens of the United States on the date their applications are signed; permanent legal resident status does not qualify. Male and female students compete separately. The 2015 contest will begin on September 1, 2014. Applications will be available to download at that time, and will be due to the Elks Lodge closest to the applicant's home by December 5, 2014. Applicants will be judged on scholarship, leadership, and financial need. Contest Website:
www.elks.org/enf/scholars/mvs.cfm
 Elks National Foundation-2750 North Lakeview Avenue Chicago, IL 60614-2256
 773-755-4728 enf@elks.org

Temecula Lodge: Temecula Valley, CA No. 2801, 28061 Diaz Rd Temecula, CA 92590-3434. Lodge: 951-695-7470 Office: 951-695-7470
temeculaelks@verizon.net

Riverside Lodge: Riverside, CA No. 643, 6166 Brockton Ave, Riverside, CA 92506-2201. Lodge: 951-683-0370 Office: 951-683-0370
elks643@sbcglobal.net (Lodge)

Lake Elsinore Lodge: Lake Elsinore/Wildomar, CA No. 2591, 33700 Mission Trail Wildomar, CA 92595-8430 Lodge: 951-674-6804 elks2591@gmail.com (Lodge)

Education

1. Mt. San Jacinto College: Summer College for Kids Program: Program runs every summer. Ages 6-17. Information on how to apply for the program gets posted on the website in mid-May. Program contact 951-487-3707
www.msjc.edu/ContinuingEducation/Pages/default.aspx
2. Corporation for National & Community Service (CNCS)
 1201 New York Ave. NW Washington, DC. 20525 202-606-5000
AmeriCorps.gov

Education Opportunity

- Increasing the number of young children that demonstrate school readiness.
- Improving student academic performance in literacy, science or math.

- Improving student academic engagement resulting in improved school attendance.
- Building program capacity that helps economically disadvantage and first generation students enter college.

Work Force Development

1. Corporation for National & Community Service (CNCS)
1201 New York Ave., NW, Washington, DC. 20525 202-606-5000
AmeriCorps.gov

Economic Opportunity
 - Increasing the number of economically disadvantaged individuals transitioning into safe, healthy and affordable housing, and/or
 - Increasing financial literacy of low income individuals and families.
2. Work Force Development of Temecula and Murrieta
30135 Technology Drive, Murrieta, CA 92563 951-304-5900.
www.cityoftemecula.org/Temecula/Businesses/Assistance/WorkforceTraining.htm
Monday-Thursday 8:00 A.M.–5:00 P.M. Closed on Fridays
3. Planet Youth Workforce Investment Board, 400 W. Graham, Lake Elsinore, CA 92530 951-471-8415
www.rivcowib.org/JobSeeker/Youth/LakeElsinorePlanetYouth/tabid/88/Default.aspx
 - Help with training
 - Occupational Training
 - Internships
 - Paid work experience
 - Helps with graduating from High School, GED preparation, and tutoring
 - Helps get you into college

APPENDIX N
CAREGIVERS RESOURCE LIST

Caregivers Resource List

Themes: Challenges for the Caregivers and Financial Hardships

Challenges for the Caregiver:

Dial 211 for resources and referrals for health and human services.

Child Protective Services 800-442-4918

Adult Protective Services 951-491-7123

1. Riverside County Office on Aging-Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (GRG) and relative caregivers
 - Individualized Support-Advocate for families facing complex issues.
 - Support Groups – for grandparents to know they are not alone, share information and resources, special workshops to learn new skills, receive peer support, emotional and practical community services support call 951-791-3594 for meeting times and locations.

Office on Aging Website www.rcaging.org
 Network of Care Website www.riverside.networkofcare.org
 Hemet Service Center, 749 N. State Street, Hemet, CA 92543 951-791-3594 or 800-510-2020 Warmline 800-303-0001
 Administrative Office, 6296 River Crest Drive Suite K, Riverside, CA 92507 951-867-3800 or 800-510-2020

2. Family Justice Center of Riverside County, Monday-Friday 9:00 A.M.–5:00 P.M.
 - Ensuring Safety- emergency shelter, housing, food and gas.
 - Protecting Families- providing counseling for children and families.
 - Seeking Justice- guidance, information, support

Riverside Family Justice Center 3900 Orange Street, Riverside, CA 92501 951-955-6100
 Southwest Family Justice Center, 30045 Technology Dr. Ste. #101, Murrieta, CA 92563 951-304-5680 www.rivcofjc.org

3. Beyond the Walls: A GUIDE to Services for Families Affected by Incarceration. Often it is hard for families who have a member in prison, jail or detention to handle finances, keep in touch with their loved one, care for their children and keep the family safe and healthy. Children with parents that are locked up need support, as do caretakers for those children. In addition, when a family member returns from incarceration or detention, the return home can be challenging.
www.dshs.wa.gov/kinshipcare/publication.shtml

There are services at the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). This publication helps families find the right program and assistance for their situation.

4. Community Outreach Ministry, Monday-Friday 9:00 A.M.–5:00 P.M.
23905 Clinton Keith Suite 114 #116, Wildomar, CA 92595 951-698-7650
www.communityoutreachministry.org
 - Emergency Service Referrals
 - Crisis Intervention
 - Outreach, Camping and Mentoring for children and youth
 - Christmas Party
5. National Committee of Grandparents for Children’s Rights (NCGCR), a strong, effective, independent voice for all the children of America.
www.childrensdefense.org/policy-priorities/advocate-family-resources/child-advocacy-groups/resources/national-committee-of.html
6. Grand Voices for Children of America – National, State and local, Generations United Improving the lives of children, youth and older people through intergenerational strategies, programs and policies.
<http://gu.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=BFpE8dIIIDg%3d&tabid=157&mid=606>
7. Open Doors – Parent Caregiver Support Group – see flyer at the end of this appendix.
8. Riverside County Department of Mental Health, Parents/Caregivers–see flyer at the end of this appendix.

Financial Hardship

Riverside County Department of Public Social Service (DPSS)

<http://dpss.co.riverside.ca.us/> 951-245-3100

1. CalFresh/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) electronic transfer benefits card with pin to buy food from the grocery store for eligible families. Customer Call Center 877-410-8827 <http://dpss.co.riverside.ca.us/self-sufficiency/calfresh-snap/apply>
2. Medi-Cal No or low cost health care for California residents for eligible children and families. Customer Call Center 877-410-8827 <http://dpss.co.riverside.ca.us/self-sufficiency/medical>
3. Riverside County Department of Public Social Services, Family Resource Center, Improving and strengthening families and children who are overburdened and disadvantaged through parenting skills, self-sufficiency, information and referral services, education and literacy, and life skills. <http://dpss.co.riverside.ca.us/childrens-services-division/youth-and-community-resources/frc/introduction>
4. Riverside County Department of Public Social Services, Child Care Services. Provides child care payments for child care expenses to a variety of eligible families. <http://dpss.co.riverside.ca.us/self-sufficiency/child-care>
5. CalWORKS- California Work Opportunities and Responsibilities for Kids is temporary financial assistance for eligible needy families who have had a reduction in their income. <http://dpss.co.riverside.ca.us/self-sufficiency/calworks>
6. Riverside County Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) program. Services to transition participants from welfare dependency to self-sufficiency and employment. <http://dpss.co.riverside.ca.us/self-sufficiency/employment-services>

7. Riverside County Workforce Development Centers (WDC)
Jobs, educational and vocational training services for Veterans, Youth, and Seniors. Workshops-resume builder, job searching, interviewing and networking. Riverside Office, 1325 Spruce Street, Riverside, CA 92507 951-955-3100
Murrieta Office, 30135 Technology Drive, Murrieta, CA 92563 951-304-5900.
8. Homeless Programs organizes and delivers social services and housing options to move homeless people to stable housing and maximum sufficiency.
<http://dpss.co.riverside.ca.us/homeless-programs>
9. Volunteers of America—provides quality affordable housing for low and moderate income households, homeless, families, elderly, and people with disabilities including mental disabilities. Support services for children and family, elderly and disabled, public safety, rehabilitation treatment and recovery services. 3530 Camino Del Rio North Suite 300, San Diego, CA 92108
www.voa.org/local-offices/volunteers-of-america-southwest-california
10. California Relative Caregiver Family Option Program for foster youth placed with relative foster parents. <http://stepupforkin.org/category/kin-caregivers/>

Utility Assistance

Community Action Partnership 800-999-5585 or 951-955-6448

Teen Suicide

Teen Suicide Riverside County Department of Public Health, Injury Prevention Services Rebecca Hansen Program Coordinator 951-358-7171
rhansen@rivcocha.org

Teaching Caregivers about Drugs and Gangs Riverside County Sheriff's Department Youth Accountability Team 395 East Latham Hemet, CA 92543 951-453-7918
vsgomez@riversidesheriff.org
Deputy Probation Officer Leon Reynolds 951-538-6356 lreynolds@rcprob.us

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<http://www.patheos.com/Resources/Additional-Resources/New-Challenges-New-Opportunities-for-Suburban-Churches-Samuel-Atchison-05-06-2011.html>.
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